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THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

BY THE VERY REV
W. PAKENHAM WALSH D.D
DEAN OF CASHEL

600091429V

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD;

OR,

Manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament.

BY

W. PAKENHAM WALSH, D.D.
DEAN OF CASHEL.

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TO

HER DEAR MEMORY

AT WHOSE INSTANCE

AND

WITH WHOSE HELP

THESE PAPERS WERE COMPILED.

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PREFACE.

THE subject presented in the following pages, though sufficiently familiar to theologians, has not attracted the amount of general attention which its importance deserves. The works in which it has been discussed are for the most part of a technical and learned character, and few attempts have been made to present it in an intelligible and interesting form to the public. And yet few subjects are likely to commend themselves more thoroughly to devout and thoughtful readers of the Holy Scriptures, than one which exhibits the "Christ" of the New Testament as the "Angel" of the Old, and anticipates the great outlines of the Saviour's earthly history and mediatorial work, in His previous manifestations to the sons of men.

The unanimous voice of the early Christian Church acknowledged that "the Angel of the Lord," who so frequently appeared as the Revealer of God's will to man in the older dispensation, was none other than the Second Person in the glorious Trinity. There was a difference of opinion as to the exact character of that angelic nature which He assumed;

but there was a general concurrence that a divine Being, one in essence with the Father, but distinct from Him in person, was the constant medium of these communications between Jehovah and mankind.

Justin Martyr, the earliest of those Christian apologists whose writings have come down to us, made great use of this fact in his arguments for divine truth, and he was followed by a long line of writers who have employed it in defence of the Christian religion. He employed it also in his celebrated "Dialogue with Trypho," to establish the divinity of the Lord Jesus, against the Jews. St. Athanasius, and other great advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity, made special and powerful use of it in their controversies with the heretics of their times; and although, as Canon Liddon has remarked, the course of the Arian controversy led to some modifications, both of view and statement, on the subject, yet the main ground of the argument was never surrendered, nor the deep conviction as to these pre-appearances of the Son of God destroyed or weakened.

It is remarkable, too, that the more ancient Jews continually referred to "the Angel of the Lord" as "the LOGOS or WORD of God," and identified Him with the expected Messiah. It was only in later times, and in order to escape controversial difficulties, that this interpretation was abandoned, either by Jews or Christians. It is easy to

see why modern Jews would discard an interpretation which can be so powerfully used against themselves; and it is equally easy to see why the support which it gives to the pre-existence and deity of Christ would be evaded by Socinians. Roman Catholic writers, as Hengstenberg observes, were actuated by the wish to secure a biblical foundation for the worship of angels, and consequently were disposed to ignore or resist a view which deprived them of apparent support. The spirit of inquiry, however, which was awakened by the reformation, recalled the more ancient doctrine on this subject, and the opinion of the first ages of the Church has become, once more, the prevailing one amongst the best writers, both of the Anglican and continental reformed Churches.

An attempt is made in these pages to exhibit, in a simple form and in a devotional spirit, the striking argument for the pre-existence and Godhead of our blessed Lord, which is thus presented to us in the Old Testament scriptures, and to throw a fresh interest around the facts and doctrines of the New Testament by means of these wonderful foreshadowings.

From the very nature of the case, the argument is a cumulative one, and, therefore, its force cannot be fully felt until the reader has had the whole of the evidence before him; but we are much mistaken if each successive instance in this series of Divine manifestations will not strengthen the conviction

that the great verities of the gospel of salvation were set forth, in the earlier dispensation, by the great Angel of the Covenant, who was Himself divine, and that this divine Revealer was none other than the Son of God himself. And as we pass onwards and upwards from the transient and angelic appearances of this illustrious Mediator in the olden time, to the clearer and more abiding exhibitions of his divine grace and truth "in the days of His flesh," we shall see how God was preparing the world for those glorious mysteries which in the fulness of time were to be more distinctly made known.

It was with a view to illustrate these marvellous prefigurings that the following papers were originally drawn up for that valuable serial "The Church of England Sunday School Magazine," and it is with the humble hope and earnest prayer that they may be more widely useful, that they are now considerably enlarged and embodied in this volume.

The subject has been divested of all technicalities, and presented in the simplest form, but a brief Appendix has been added which will direct inquiring students to more elaborate sources of information, and enable them to pursue their investigations into its deeper literature and criticism.

W. P. W.

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December, 1875.

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD;

OR,

Manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament.

I.

THE ANGEL OF HIS PRESENCE.

"No man hath seen God at any time." This is a great and solemn fact which meets us at the very outset of all religious inquiry, and one which, if it stood alone, would be as disheartening as it is overwhelming. He is described in Holy Scripture as that "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). When Moses wished to look upon the glory of this infinite God, he was met by an answer that must have appalled him: "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see Me, and live!"

Two reasons suggest themselves for this fact; first of all, no mortal eye could endure the intensity of that dazzling light. When a heathen king objected to the missionary's testimony concerning the one living and true God, that he could not see Him, and therefore could not believe in Him, the missionary took the king into the courtyard, and asked him to look intently upon the sun, which was burning in high noon; and when the monarch replied that the attempt would blind him, the missionary answered, "If you cannot look even upon one of His servants without being dazzled by his brightness, how could you endure looking upon Himself?" Do we not read that when Daniel by the River Hiddekel, and St. John in Patmos, beheld even the veiled glory of the Lord, their "comeliness was turned into corruption," and they "fell at his feet as dead"?

But there is another reason for all this. It is the sin which dwelleth in us. This of itself renders it impossible for us to see God or to dwell with Him. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50). When Isaiah beheld the glory of the Lord "sitting upon a throne high and lifted up," he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isa. vi. 5). Not until sin is taken away can we look upon God without being confounded: not until

we are delivered from the body of sin and death can we behold Him and live.

Angels who never sinned may look upon God and be undismayed, but sinful man may look upon Him only through a Mediator who can dim the glory so as to make it endurable, and cover the transgression so as to remove it from His sight. And so the same scripture which declares that "no man hath seen God at any time," adds the comforting intelligence that "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," or, as the word means, "hath revealed" Him (John i. 18). So that all we know of God, or see of God, is revealed and made known to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. And this is true not only of all that has been made known to us of God since the Saviour's incarnation, but of all that was made known to mankind from the very beginning of the world. Whatever displays of the hidden Godhead were made in the Old Testament times, whether to patriarchs or to prophets, or to any sons of men, were in the Person and through the agency of His eternal Son.

With these great landmarks to guide us, we shall consider some of the chief manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, and more especially those in which He stands revealed as "the Angel of the Lord." It is a branch of Bible study which demands more attention than it has commonly received, not only because it brings before us the pre-exist-

ence and deity of Christ in a very remarkable and forcible manner, but exhibits to us by way of anticipation all the leading characteristics of His glorious work; and it does this not by any secondary or intermediate agency, but by the intervention of Christ himself.

The slightest attention to the Scripture record will convince us that throughout the Old Testament dispensation there is one celestial Being, who, though called an angel, stands distinguished from all other angels or messengers of God by certain insignia of Divinity. He is plainly above them in point of rank, and superior to them in commission and in power. He is honoured with names and titles which never belong to them, and receives reverence and worship to which none but God himself has claim. In a word, He is not "*an* angel," but "*the* Angel of the Lord"; "the Angel of the Covenant"; the same glorious being who in the New Testament stands forth as the Mediator between God and men. And this "Angel of the Lord" continually appears in the Old Testament dispensation, as the Revealer of God, and of God's grace to man. Even in that preparatory period "His delights were with the sons of men," and there is not a phase of His character and office as the Messiah which He did not then anticipate, and illustrate in His intercourse with this lower world. Step by step we can trace in those ancient times Christ's own foreshadowings of all

that He was to accomplish in "the fulness of time."

Let us commence our investigations by considering one of His distinctive titles—"THE ANGEL OF HIS PRESENCE." It occurs in that beautiful passage where the prophet is recounting the mercies of God to Israel in the olden times: "For He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. lxiii. 8, 9). The expression is a very remarkable one; not "*an* angel *in* God's presence," such as Gabriel was, but "*the* angel *of* His presence"; one, as it were, who carried the presence of God with him wherever he went. In 2 Sam. xvii. 11, we read that Hushai counselled Absalom not to go to battle "*in his own person.*" The margin reads, "that thy *presence go not to the battle.*" Thus a man's presence is put for himself; and the expression "the angel of God's presence" seems therefore to indicate the very presence of God—the manifestation in some remarkable way of His glory and His Godhead in the person of this transcendent ambassador. Carry this thought in your mind, and compare it with the third and fourth verses of the first chapter of the Hebrews, and you will see how perfectly they harmonize: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and *the express image of His*

person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made *so much better than the angels,* as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Angels might carry messages from God; but Christ alone could bring His presence into our very midst.

Thus a chain of evidence connects God with "the Angel," and the Angel with Christ; representing Him as the manifestation of God to the world, even in the oldest periods of its history, and throwing light on that remarkable saying of our Lord: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

But let us enter a little more minutely into the history of the manifestation of this "Angel of the Presence" to the Church of the Old Testament. When the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, how were they guided on their way to Canaan through the trackless desert? Not by some native of the region who could point the way; not by a blind instinct of the people; not even by the knowledge of Moses himself; no, not even by the guidance of an angel. Jehovah himself condescended to be their guide: "The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night,

from before the people" (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). Thus we see that in that mysterious "cloud and fiery pillar" God himself condescended to be their guard and guide; but if we turn to the fourteenth chapter and nineteenth verse, we shall find that "the LORD" who was in that pillar was none other than "the Angel of His presence" of whom we have been speaking: "And the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them."

Let us go on to Exodus xxiii. 20, and the Christology of this pillar will more plainly appear: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, and provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For Mine Angel shall go before thee."

Observe how many expressions in this passage limit the reference of it to the only-begotten Son, who alone reveals His Father unto us. 1. "*My name is in Him.*" Surely this could not be said of an ordinary angel, for God himself declares, "I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give unto another" (Isa. xlii. 8). 2. "*Obey His voice.*" Of whom could this be said by the

Eternal Father, except of that glorious ONE, concerning whom there came a voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him"? 3. "*Provoke Him not.*" What solemn words! Too solemn to be applied in such a reference to any mere messenger from heaven; but gathering deep and awful meaning when we read the warning of the Apostle, drawn from the conduct of these very Israelites towards the Christ of God: "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents" (1 Cor. x. 9). 4. "*He will not pardon your transgressions.*" Does not this striking statement lead us to exclaim, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Does it not, when taken in connection with all that is said concerning this Angel of the Presence, lead us to conclude that He was none other than that glorious Being who, in the New Testament, is called "the Word of God," who is represented as alone revealing His Father's will, and of whom it is written, "The Word was with God, and the Word was God"?

We pass on to another striking passage in the thirty-third chapter of Exodus. Israel had sinned. They had made a golden calf, and worshipped it, and the Lord declares in His anger, that He will withdraw His presence from amongst them, and send an angel in His stead; not "the Angel of the Presence"—*that* angel was to be withdrawn; but another angel, an inferior messenger, whose pre-

sence would not and could not be to Israel all that the Angel of God's presence so long had been to them. "The Lord said unto Moses, Depart and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt . . . and I will send an angel before thee . . . for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way" (vers. 1, 2, 3). This was sad intelligence indeed. "And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments" (ver. 4). Moses himself is overwhelmed and perplexed by the announcement; he laments this change in God's procedure; he is unwilling to go up before the people under such altered care and guidance. "And Moses said unto the Lord, See, Thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me" (ver. 12). God had indeed told him that the people should have the guidance of an angel; but which of all the host of heaven should be deputed to this office Moses did not know; and even were he assured that it was to be the mightiest angel that stood before the throne of God, he would not willingly accept such a guide and protector instead of the Angel of the Presence, who had been hitherto their Guardian and Director; and therefore he entreats the Lord, saying, "If Thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (ver. 15). On this the Lord restores the Angel, and Israel

walks once more beneath the favour of their Divine Guide; for "the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name."

This was the Angel that was with "the Church in the wilderness;" this was the Christ of God who in all the Church's wanderings and dangers has evermore been her Leader and Defender. This is He whose last gracious words to her on earth conveyed an assurance of His perpetual presence in her midst: "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Of old, in the person of this glorious Angel, He was with His covenant people in their exodus, their pilgrimage, and their rest. Still is He amongst His people in all their sorrows and in all their joys; in all the changes and chances of their mortal life; guarding, guiding, and preserving them unto their everlasting inheritance. It is the comfort of every believer to know that he can evermore rely upon the presence of this Divine and unfailing Friend.

"I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my Guide and Stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me!"

LYTE.

II.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

We have considered Christ as "the Angel of God's Presence" to the whole Church. We shall now view Him in His relationship to each individual of it, and more especially as "the Guardian Angel" of Old as well as of New Testament saints.

A passage in the forty-eighth chapter of Genesis brings this idea of guardianship very distinctly before us. The aged Jacob is pronouncing his dying blessing on the sons of Joseph, and in words as emphatic as they are beautiful commends them to the care of One who had been his own and his fathers' Protector in all the varied circumstances of life. "He blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." (ver. 16.)

Much has been spoken and written without any Scripture warrant concerning guardian angels. It is plain indeed from the testimony of the Bible that angels do act as guardians to God's people, nay more, as *servants* to them: "Are they not all minis-

tering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14). Sometimes we read of an individual angel—as in Peter's deliverance from prison (Acts xii. 7); sometimes of hosts of angels, as in Jacob's vision at Mahanaim (Gen. xxxii. 1, 2), sent forth for the deliverance or comfort of God's servants. Nor are we to think ourselves less indebted to their care now, whenever God sees that we need it, than were His people in the times of old. Though invisible to us, there are ten thousand ways in which they may be employed for our defence and care. If we are God's children, angels are our servants, and from this fact we may learn that so far from its being *our* duty to worship *them*, it is *their* duty to serve *us*.

But the notion that each individual has his own peculiar guardian angel—a notion inculcated in the Church of Rome, and followed up by a special prayer to this supposed protector*—is one that has no Scripture evidence to bear it out, and has given rise to many superstitions.

Let us lead you to a loftier view, and a more comforting one, namely, that Holy Scripture does

* The following prayer to "The Guardian Angel" is the one most commonly found in Roman Catholic books of devotion, and it will be observed that it is not even a prayer for the angel's intercession (as is sometimes alleged), but for his direct control and protection:—"O Angel of God, to whose care I am committed by the supreme clemency, illuminate, defend, and govern me this day in all my thoughts, words, and actions." What more could be asked from God himself?

point out to each child of God a Guardian Angel, to whose omniscient eye and omnipotent hand he is entrusted; not a created angel, like those who stand ministering around the throne, but an uncreated Angel, ever present and almighty, even that Christ who sits upon the throne of glory, and is at once the Angel of God's Presence, and the Guardian Angel of God's people.

It is of this Guardian Angel the patriarch speaks; it is to Him that he attributes all the remarkable deliverances of his life. Hosts of angels, as we have seen, were concerned for his safety, but here he passed by all mention of them, and particularizes *One*: "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." From his bed of death, and with heaven in view, the past and the future commingling in his thoughts, he recalls the century and a half which he had been allowed to spend on earth, and attributes all his mercies during all that period to this Divine Deliverer; whose continued care he invokes for those whom he is about to leave behind.

You will observe how in the same breath he invokes GOD twice, and the Angel once—not as being different, but the same—and how he asks one and the same blessing from each: "GOD, before whom my fathers did walk,"—"the GOD which fed me all my life long"—"THE ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads!" And it is worth noting that the word "bless," being in the singular, is significant, and relates equally to God and to

the Angel. This then was Jacob's Guardian Angel: and not his alone, but, as the patriarch declares, Abraham's and Jacob's also; to whom He had been evermore a Guide and Guard.

Let us retrace the history for one or two indications of this Angel's protection to his fathers. In the story of Hagar's flight from Sarah (Gen. xvi.) we meet with the first mention of this Guardian Angel: "The Angel of the Lord found her by a fountain" (ver. 7), and having heard from her the story of her flight, addresses her in these remarkable words, which claim more than angelic power—"I will multiply thy seed exceedingly." In the tenth verse we learn that this Angel heard her cry; in the eleventh we read, "the LORD hath heard thy affliction." Hagar "called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, *Thou God seest me*," and she assigns a memorable reason, "for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?" (ver. 13), or as Hengstenberg explains it, "Do I see after my seeing?" *i.e.*, "Am I alive after looking upon God?" From all this it is evident (to use the words of this eminent critic) "that the Angel is joined to God by an inseparable oneness, and that His territory is just as wide as that of Elohim," *i.e.*, God himself.

The life of Hagar is so mixed up with that of Abraham that we may adduce another parallel instance from it. In Gen. xxi. we find her once more in a desert, but more desolate and outcast than

before. Her dying child is gasping for water, and there is none to give him. "She cast the child under one of the shrubs; and she went and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child" (ver. 16). Just at that juncture the Guardian Angel appears and comforts her, and opens her eyes to see a well of water, and thus saves her child. This was the same exalted Angel who had appeared to her before, for He repeats His promise, "I will make him a great nation" (ver. 18), a promise, be it remembered, which had previously fallen in exactly the same words from the mouth of God himself concerning this same child (Gen. xvii. 20). The Angel heard the cry of Ishmael and of his weeping mother, and came to their relief; but it is expressly said that it was *God* himself who "heard the voice of the lad" (ver. 17).

Thus we are led step by step to the conclusion that this Guardian Angel of the patriarchs—equal to God, and one with God—was none other than His Eternal Son; who, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, was the Great Revealer of God to man even in the Old Testament times. And what a blessed view of Christ do these, His first appearances, afford to us! What love and mercy are displayed in thus finding the perishing exile in the wilderness, and in the very presence of death; bringing back the wandering by a way they knew not, and opening wells of salvation for the lost and

weary! Truly this first manifestation of Christ is a pledge and symbol of His whole work and character.

We shall have occasion to enter into the story of Abraham's life in its relation to this Angel of God, when we come to consider another aspect of our subject, but we shall now pass on to Jacob's history, which, as he himself intimates, was an eventful one, full of changes and of chances, of sorrows and of evils, from each and all of which this Guardian Angel had redeemed him. We have no doubt that in his grateful review of life he included spiritual mercies as well as earthly ones; and that when he speaks of the Angel which redeemed him "from all evil" he recognizes in Him the Saviour of his soul, as well as the Protector of his body. This view, however, will come before us when, in a subsequent chapter, we contemplate Christ as the "Angel of the Covenant." At present we confine ourselves to the subject of temporal deliverances wrought for Jacob by His power.

Now, if we can find one undeniable case in which Jacob obtained deliverance from evil, through the power of this Almighty Angel, it will verify and illustrate his assertion that it was this same Angel who "redeemed him from all evil," and it will help us to understand how the Lord Jesus Christ is still the true Guardian Angel of His people.

From Genesis xxxi. we learn how unjustly and harshly Laban had behaved to Jacob; how he deceived him about his daughter, and how he changed

his wages "ten times." It was when Laban was thus wronging him, and making his life miserable, that the Angel, who redeemed him from all evil, delivered him from such a taskmaster. We learn this from Jacob's address to Rachel and Leah. In the fifth verse he says, "The God of my father hath been with me"; in the seventh verse he adds, "God suffered him (*i.e.*, Laban) not to hurt me"; in the eleventh verse he says, "The Angel of God spake to me in a dream"; and in the thirteenth verse he distinctly states that this Angel of God said to him, "I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar."

Thus Jacob's Guardian Angel was none other than the God of Bethel. It was He, and none other, who had been with him in all these trying circumstances and suffered not Laban to hurt him. None but He could have rendered to the patriarch the special help which he required. Can we not see in all this a sample and emblem of Christ's present work? Does He not find us engaged in a bitter and fruitless service, wherein we are earning a wretched and deceptive wage? Does He not provide manumission and deliverance, saving us from the thrall of the great Deceiver, and not suffering Satan, the great taskmaster, to hurt or destroy us?

But this Angel's words to Jacob carry us back to a former scene: "I am the God of Bethel." We remember how in that memorable night, when the patriarch saw in his dream a ladder which reached

from earth to heaven, he also saw "the angels of God ascending and descending on it." (Gen. xxviii. 12). But a Being infinitely above them all, as well in dignity as in place, was at the head of that ladder: "The LORD stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac" (ver. 13). And yet this God was Jacob's Guardian Angel—the God of Bethel—the Angel that redeemed him from all evil. So this wondrous Angel himself asserts, and so Jacob himself declares: "The Angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, ... I am the God of Bethel" (Gen. xxxi. 11—13).

Jacob, when he slept at Bethel, was flying from his brother Esau. After a long day's journey, weary and anxious and defenceless, he laid him down to rest. Just at this juncture the Great Guardian of his life appears to him, and assures him of a secure and peaceful rest in the promised land. What a picture of that higher guardianship which Christ still affords to all His pilgrim people; reminding us of His blessed promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," assuring us that "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep"! Let temptation assail and guilt pursue, yet from His opening heaven He reveals the way of access unto God, and cheers the wanderer on his troubled way with the promise of the land of rest.

These are but a few examples of Christ's manifestations taken from Jacob's life: another equally

remarkable (Gen. xxxii.) will present itself in a future chapter, but in a different aspect. Many other illustrations of His power and love, as the great Guardian Angel of His people, might be adduced from the lives of other Old Testament saints. Two notable examples from the Book of Daniel will occur to every reader. When the three Hebrew confessors came forth uninjured from the fiery furnace, the king exclaimed, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His Angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him!" (Dan. iii. 28.) But surely this Angel of deliverance was no ordinary angel! Was it not rather that glorious One concerning whom this same monarch cried aloud in his astonishment, and said, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire . . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God"? (ver. 25.) And so again, when Daniel proclaims to King Darius the secret of his deliverance, saying, "My God hath sent His Angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths," who can doubt but that the same strong "Son of God" who had been with Daniel's fellow-exiles in the furnace had been with himself in the den of lions?

How much more cheering and exalting as well as scriptural is the view thus presented to us than that commonly attached to the expression, "Our Guardian Angel"! What an idea it gives of Christ's condescension and love, in *all* this direct contact with and unfailing care on behalf of His people, not

only in that darker dispensation under which Jacob and Daniel lived, but in this brighter and more glorious one in which our lot is cast! Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD encampeth* round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them"; and well might he add (in order to raise our thoughts above any created spirit and fix them upon Him who is Divine), "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in HIM" (Psalm xxxiv. 7, 8). None but this Guardian Angel—at once omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, could thus encamp around all God's children in all places and at all times, amidst all their varying dangers and exigencies; and of none other in earth or heaven can every pilgrim to Zion say, in the expressive language of the dying patriarch, "The GOD which fed me all my life long—the ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil!" Of such a Guardian, and of Him alone, can it be said, "Behold He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD himself is thy keeper, the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night; the LORD shall preserve thee from all

* A thoughtful and learned writer has observed that "the word 'encampeth' probably alludes to that appearance to Jacob on his return from Mesopotamia, when he saw *God's host*, and from it called the place 'Mahanaim,' two camps, and after that saw the Angel of the Lord. . . . The captain of a host is said to 'encamp;' but he 'encamps around' through the army of which he is the head."

evil: He shall preserve thy soul; the LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore." (Psalm cxxi. 4—8). To such a Guardian we need not hesitate to pray; to such a Guardian we may confidently entrust both our bodies and our souls, assured that He can bless, and He can save.

"I feel Thine arms around,
Saviour, ever near!
With Thee let me be found;
So shall I never fear
Whatever ills abound:
Saviour, ever dear!

"Thine is the day and night,
Saviour, ever near!
Thine is the dark and light;
Be Thou my covert here.
O shield me with Thy might,
Saviour, ever dear.

"And when I come to die,
Saviour, ever near,
Receive my parting sigh;
And in the hour of fear
Be to my spirit nigh,
Saviour, ever dear!"

HYMNS OF FAITH AND HOPE.

III.

THE ANGEL LAWGIVER.

We have already considered two of the aspects in which Christ, as "the Angel of the Lord," is revealed in the Old Testament; we have contemplated Him as the Angel of God's Presence, and as the Guardian Angel of His Church and people. We now advance another step in our inquiry and come to consider Him as "the Angel Lawgiver."

This is a view of the subject that is generally overlooked. We are so much in the habit of viewing the Lord Jesus in connection with the Gospel, that we are apt to pass over His connection with the giving of the Law. We often turn to Calvary to ponder on His love, and to Zion to behold His glory; but we seldom think of looking for Him amidst the thunders of Sinai; and yet for His Church He is as much in the latter as in either of the former. It is His presence which makes Sinai endurable, just as it His presence which makes Calvary precious, and Zion glorious. Indeed of the Old Testament as of the New, Christ is the centre and the key. He is the foundation on which both

rest: He is the light which resolves the mystery of each. What was said of Joseph in the prison, may be said of all the varying arrangements of the darker, as well as of the brighter dispensation: "Whatsoever they did there, He was the doer of it."

In his review of the Old Testament history, as recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts, St. Stephen alludes three several times to "the Angel of the Lord." In the 30th verse he speaks of His appearance to Moses "in the bush"; and there can be no doubt that this Angel was Jehovah; for we read in the third chapter of Exodus that "THE ANGEL of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here I am. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." Thus, the Angel that appeared to Moses is identified with God himself. It is God that speaks to him out of the bush; it is His presence that makes the place "holy ground"; and it

is the consciousness of this Divine presence that causes Moses to tremble.

In the 35th verse St. Stephen mentions this Angel again in connection with the same mysterious scene: "This Moses whom they refused did God send to be a ruler and deliverer by the hand of THE ANGEL which appeared to him in the bush." Well might that bush, "still burning but unconsumed," symbolize to Moses not only the Church of God, persecuted and not destroyed, but also the indwelling of Deity in that more than angelic messenger; well may it shadow forth to us the incarnation of the Divine nature in the human nature of the great Messiah; brightness and shadow, strength and feebleness, glory and humility, blending strangely in that burning bush, and in our Emmanuel, "God with us."

But in the 38th verse the proto-martyr carries us from the bush to the mountain, from the crackling thorns at its base to the quaking heights of Mount Sinai wrapped in flames, and places us face to face with the Angel Lawgiver: "This is he, that was in the Church in the wilderness, with THE ANGEL which spake to him in the Mount Sina, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Thus does St. Stephen exhibit to his hearers that glorious ONE with whom Moses held converse for twice forty days in the Mount of God; presenting Him to them and to us with the "lively oracles" in His mediatorial hands, and leaving no

room to doubt that it was the self-same Jesus upon whose glorious form he was so soon to gaze with enraptured eyes, and upon whose beloved name he was so soon to call with dying lips.

We know of nothing which invests the Ten Commandments with such intense interest as the fact thus disclosed; that they were given to man, as it were, by the same hands which were afterwards pierced for our infraction of them: that they were engraven by the same finger which points out deliverance from their curse. It forms a link between Sinai and Calvary: it assures us better than aught else could do, that the Law and the Gospel are parts of one harmonious whole; that the law is not "against the promises of God"; that the believer has nothing to fear from the Great Lawgiver, seeing that He is none other than his Saviour.

Let us put off our shoes from off our feet, and draw nearer to contemplate this Divine mystery.

We can gather from several passages of the Old and New Testaments that angels were present and employed at the giving of the law. Thus in Psalm lxviii. 17, we read: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." So again in Hebrews ii. 2, the law of God is described as "The Word spoken by angels," and this statement is explained by an expression in the speech of St. Stephen, when he tells the Jews that they "received the law by the disposition of angels"

(Acts vii. 53), that is, as the word means, through the medium, or ministry, or dispensation of angels. But whilst the Scriptures recognize the presence and ministry of "thousands of angels" at the giving of the law, it recognizes only one, and that One, "THE ANGEL OF THE LORD," as the promulgator of it. Amidst the countless hosts of created angels upon Mount Sinai, both Moses and Stephen distinguish a more glorious Angel who speaks with the voice and authority of Jehovah; and they mark Him out as the Great Statute-maker of the decalogue—the Angel Lawgiver.

With all this to guide us, let us turn to a striking passage in "the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before his death" (Deut. xxxiii. 2, 3). He opens his discourse with a sublime description of Jehovah as the Giver of the Law, and incorporates with it a comforting display of His grace and love towards His people: "The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints" (or holy ones, *i.e.*, angels); "from His right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words." How beautifully are blended here the glory of the Lawgiver and the love of the Redeemer! He who gave "the fiery law" is the same "who loved the people." The saints are described as safe and

happy in His hands: they "sit down," like loving disciples, at His feet, and joyfully "receive His words," because they know Him to be not only their Judge but their Redeemer. They can say, in the language of the evangelical prophet, "The LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King, He will save us" (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

What a blessed view is thus presented to us of the law of God! It was given by Him who gave Himself for us; it was promulgated by Him who has since satisfied all its claims. In dealing with his Saviour, the believer is dealing with the Angel Lawgiver. There is no third party to be won over before he can feel that he is safe. No, the Lawgiver, and the Redeemer from the curse of the law are ONE. If the Redeemer absolve, the Lawgiver will not and cannot condemn. If Christ pardon, who can produce the broken law to accuse? It is His law, and if He has satisfied it, and is satisfied concerning it, none can ground an accusation upon it. "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. viii. 33—35).

At the giving of the law Moses enacted the part of a typical mediator. The people, awed by the terrors of Mount Sinai, entreated him to stand between them and God, saying, "Why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall

die. For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it." But when we turn to Heb. xii. 21, we find that Moses himself was so overwhelmed with the terrors of the scene that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." He evidently stood as much in need of a mediator for himself as did the people who entreated him to become a mediator for them.

How then is it that we read of Moses (Exod. xxiv. 15—18) that he went up into the midst of the darkening clouds and fiery terror of Mount Sinai? How is it that he remained there for forty days and forty nights in the presence of that "devouring fire"? How is it that for a second period of forty days he there held communion with Jehovah and endured the blaze of that transcendent glory, which left upon his features such visible traces of its surpassing splendour, that he had to put a veil upon his face when he returned to the children of Israel? How are we to reconcile the terror which he felt at first with the calm composure which enabled him to bear for well-nigh three months these manifestations of Divine glory? How was it that Moses could live, when the people felt that they must die? St. Stephen's allusion explains it all. It was "THE ANGEL which spake to him in Mount Sinai"—the

real Mediator,* of whom Moses was himself but a type—the Christ of God, who in the fulness of time was to atone for that very law which he was then proclaiming. And when Moses is once assured that it is with this Angel Lawgiver he has to do, no marvel that fear gives way to confidence, and dread to calm assurance; he hesitates no more, but goes up into the Mount as to a friend, remains there as in a blessed home, and returns to the camp all radiant with the reflected glory of that more than angelic countenance.

Nor is it otherwise that alarms of conscience

* It is worth considering whether it is not of this Angel Lawgiver, and not of Moses, that St. Paul is speaking in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, verse 19, when he says that the law "was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator." Most commentators consider that Moses was the mediator here referred to; but some (and Calvin amongst the number) think it refers to Christ. The following considerations are in favour of this latter view:—1. The term "Mediator" is not applied to Moses elsewhere. 2. It is applied and appropriated in the New Testament to Christ. 3. It sustains more strongly the Apostle's argument, viz., that the law is subordinate to Christ and to His Gospel. 4. It throws additional light upon the difficult verse which follows—"Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is One," *i.e.*, there is no change in God's plan—like Himself it is but One; and the proof of this is, that there is the same Mediator both for the law and the Gospel, namely, Christ Jesus. We do not say that these arguments are decisive, but they deserve attention; and it may be added that this interpretation falls in with those passages noted in the present paper, in which the law is described as "ordained by angels," but placed for authoritative promulgation in the hands of the great Mediator between God and man—the Angel Lawgiver.

give way to holy peace, when once we are enabled to behold "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Once assured that it is with Jesus we have to do, Mount Sinai itself loses all its terror; the condemning law assumes an attitude of goodness and of truth; the soul quakes no longer before its thunder, for it beholds the law in a Mediator's hand; it sees His blood sprinkled upon the accusing decalogue, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God. And so the Apostle, when he contrasts the Law and the Gospel, reminds us that we are "not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest," but that we are "come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God," and then he conducts us through the midst of the "innumerable company of angels," "to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling"; so that we fear not to meet "God, the Judge of all," and can rejoice in the hope of dwelling with "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 22—24).

It is worth noting, moreover, how in this passage he identifies the Lawgiver of Mount Sinai with the author of the New Testament dispensation. He tells us that He "whose voice then shook the earth," is the same as He who now speaketh from heaven (xii. 25, 26); and he makes this the ground of his solemn exhortation, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who

refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven:" and then to leave no doubt as to the identity of these two speakers, he adds, "*Whose* voice *then* shook the earth: but *now* He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (vers. 25, 26). Nothing could more clearly exhibit the deity of Christ than this striking passage, and nothing could more beautifully set forth the perfect accordance between the law and the gospel.

With this fact as to the authorship of the *Law* before us, we can more clearly understand our relationship to it. It is Christ's law, for He gave it; it is Christ's law, for He satisfied it; it is Christ's law, for He kept it in all its integrity. We are delivered from it as a source of life; we are bound to it as a rule of duty. We are not "without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21). The law has not changed; but our relationship to it has changed; and it is now to us, more than ever, the law of Christ.

And it is thus that the law which once repelled begins to win us; the commandment which seemed to frown seems now to smile. It is no longer a harsh statute grating on a rebel ear, but a new covenant sounding sweetly to a loyal heart. So long as the sinner looked to it as a means of life, so long he feared and quaked; so soon as he views it as the transcript of his Saviour's character, written

by his Redeemer's loving hand, he admires and loves it. Whilst its demands remained unsatisfied, he dared not look it in the face; but now that its claims have been fully met by his gracious Lord, and translated into the perfection of His holy life, he gazes upon it with wonder and delight, and begins to reflect somewhat of its purity and loveliness.

It is a widely different thing to behold the righteous law in the hands of an avenging Judge, and to see it in the hands of an atoning Mediator; and therefore this view of Christ, as "the Angel Lawgiver" carries us up above the clouds and tempests which wrap the base of Sinai, and places us upon its majestic summit amidst eternal light and calm. These tables of stone become golden records in the hand of the Angel of the Lord, and every letter of their deep engraving becomes incorporated with the indelible records of His grace and love. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Acts vii. 12).

"O write them where the rain and wind
Shall wear them not away!
That when I leave the world behind
These in my soul may stay.

"O place them where no evil's power
Shall dare to bid them part!
Write, day by day, and hour by hour,
Thy laws within my heart!"

ALESSIE BOND FAUSSETT.

IV.

THE ANGEL EVANGELIST.

MANY of us would probably acknowledge that it was not without surprise we beheld the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity presented to us as the Lawgiver of the Old Testament. The last place, perhaps, that we expected to discover Him was amidst the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai, and the most unlikely attitude in which we were prepared to discover Him was in that of the Proclaimer of the Decalogue. And yet we have seen that Christ was The Angel who spake upon Mount Sinai, and that a new interest and meaning are thrown around the Ten Commandments when regarded as coming to us through His mediatorial hands.

We are not likely to feel a similar surprise when we are told that this same glorious Being, who was the Angel Lawgiver of the old dispensation, was also its Angel Evangelist, and that some of the clearest and fullest exhibitions of the Gospel, made in that darker time, were made directly through His instrumentality. But though such manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament are confessedly what

we might naturally expect, still they have not been sought out and dwelt upon by Bible readers with that exactness which they deserve. Let us endeavour in this chapter to unfold one of these manifestations; others will follow in due course.

We have already seen that the Law was given by the "disposition of angels"; and we know full well how deep an interest they took, and how important a part they bore, in the first promulgation of the Gospel. It was angels who announced the Saviour's birth to the Shepherds of Bethlehem. It was angels who sung the Hallelujah Chorus of the Incarnation. It was angels who witnessed and proclaimed Christ's resurrection. It was by angels lingering in His footsteps "as He went up" that His return "in like manner" was foretold to the men of Galilee. St. Peter tells us that the things which "the angels desire to look into" are the wondrous truths which have been reported unto us "by them that have preached the Gospel" (1 Peter i. 12). And St. John in the Revelation intimates that no higher employment could be assigned to one of these glorious ministers of heaven, than to be himself an ambassador of its mercy unto men: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth" (Rev. xiv. 6).

If angels have thus become evangelists, and rejoiced in bringing the "good tidings of great joy," we need not marvel that the Prince of angels—the

Head of all principalities and powers—should have been from time to time the herald of His own glorious Gospel, and that His manifestations to the world before His Incarnation should have special reference to preparing the way for it. A very striking and happy illustration of the exercise of His evangelistic office by "The Angel of the LORD" is presented to us in connection with the giving of the Law.

St. Stephen informs us that Moses was with this "Angel in Mount Sinai," and received from Him "the lively oracles to give unto us" (Acts vii. 38). But we must remember that Moses received far more upon Mount Sinai than the Ten Commandments. The giving of these latter occupied but a very short portion of those twice forty days during which he remained in the Mount of God. The rest of the time was mainly occupied in receiving from the same glorious Angel divine instructions as to the building of the Tabernacle, and the arrangement of all its ceremonial and typical services.

Let us look a little more closely into the matter. Properly speaking there were three distinct givings of the Law at Sinai: the first took place before Moses went up into Mount Sinai, and was an audible proclamation by the voice of God from amidst the smoke and thunder that enveloped the mountain. Of this Moses reminds the people when he is recalling the solemn scene: "Ye came near and stood

under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone" (Deut. iv. 11—13). Moses then recites the Commandments, and adds, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the Mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and He added no more" (Deut. v. 22). This was the first giving of the Law, and it was immediately succeeded by the forty days which Moses spent in the Mount "with the Angel that spake to him." It was not until the close of these forty days that the second giving of the Law took place, and on this second occasion it was given in a written form: "He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Exod. xxxi. 18).

But we naturally ask, "How then were those forty days employed that intervened between the first and second giving of the Law?" The answer is, they were employed mainly and chiefly in setting forth the Gospel; in exhibiting, by means of types and "patterns of things in the heavens," the won-

drous truths which in the fulness of time were to be more distinctly made known. To this Moses himself again and again adverts. He gives but one chapter to the story of the world's creation, but he devotes the chief portions of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, to a recital either of the things "shown to him upon the mount," or of the ordinances connected with them. To this the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews distinctly refers when, speaking of these examples, and shadows of heavenly things, he says, "Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount" (Heb. viii. 5). To this St. Stephen also most markedly alludes when he says, "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen" (Acts vii. 44).

Two things are to be specially noted about these Gospel revelations: first, that they were in the form of distinct and visible representations presented to the eye of Moses, but accompanied by exact and express injunctions as to their use and accompanying ceremonials; and, secondly, that He who thus showed and explained them to Moses was that same Angel Lawgiver who proclaimed the Ten Commandments at the commencement and close of the forty days, but was now employing the gracious interval

as the great Angel Evangelist, in setting forth "the Gospel of the kingdom" in a series of the most striking and expressive types and images. The importance, moreover, of every item in this pictorial gospel of Mount Sinai is evident from the fact that again and again the injunction is repeated, "Look that thou make them after their pattern which was showed thee in the mount" (Exod. xxv. 40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8). See Acts vii. 44; Heb. viii. 5.

Surely, when we bear in mind that all these details and arrangements of the Jewish tabernacle were typical of the Gospel, and of Christ Jesus, as the sum and substance of that Gospel, it invests them with the most intense interest to remember that they were all given at the same time as the Law, and by the very hand of Him whose glorious work they were intended to shadow forth. Side by side with the condemning Law came forth in expressive types and symbols the Gospel, by which its condemnation was to be abolished. On the same mountain and at the same time which witnessed the proclamation of the unbending Decalogue, was preached in emblem and figure the salvation of God. The Law made way for the Gospel, and the Gospel established the Law. These flinty tables of unswerving justice were not published without a copious codicil of grace and mercy, which provided at once for their vindication and their fulfilment.

In a word, Sinai combines the Old Testament and the New, and the Angel Lawgiver was the

Angel Evangelist as well. Through the fire and smoke of the burning mountain we catch glimpses of the mercy seat, and of the ark of the Covenant of God. When the thunders have ceased to roll, and the lightnings to flash, we catch the "still small voice" and recognize the presence of the more than Angel Preacher who is setting forth the mysteries of His own glorious Gospel. We see the way into the holiest of all, not yet indeed made manifest, "while as the first tabernacle was yet standing"; but we see the atonement, and the blood of sprinkling, and the priestly robes all glorious in their beauty, and the Great High Priest himself, who is to enter for us within the veil, and to consecrate "a new and living way," for our admission also.

Let us picture to ourselves the Great Angel Evangelist as He exhibited that wondrous "pattern of things in the heavens" to Moses upon the Mount of God. Let us think of Him as He displayed each suggestive emblem that shadowed forth Himself, and His work of love, in all its great results. Let us realize to ourselves the future Saviour of the Church, setting forth each minute particular of the Tabernacle worship and Levitical service. We do not know, we cannot tell, whether any, or (if any) what, explanation of these, in their reference to the Gospel dispensation, may have been vouchsafed to Moses by "the Angel that spake to him in Mount Sinai," or whether He expounded to him in all this ceremonial service "the things concerning Him-

self"; but with the New Testament in our hand what a view of the Redeemer is opened to our view! What a foresight of Calvary is here! What an anticipation of the joy that was set before Him, and which enabled Him to endure the cross and despise the shame! What a wondrous, visible prophecy of Gospel tidings and Gospel blessings is unfolded on the height of Sinai by the Son of God!

But was it not a Gospel also for all the centuries that were to intervene until He himself should appear? Was it not a perpetual sermon to the Jewish people, until the shadows fled away and the substance and reality succeeded? Does not the same Epistle which unfolds the mysteries of these ancient types assure us that they were an evangel to Old Testament saints; nay, does it not speak of them as being thus in possession of the same Gospel that has been given to ourselves,—"for unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them"? (Heb. iv. 2). Thus, not only upon Mount Sinai, but through the ages all along until His Incarnation, was Christ preaching by means of His own ordinances, and fulfilling His glorious functions as the Angel Evangelist of the world. Well and truly might the Messiah say, speaking even of the times before He appeared in the flesh, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest" Psalm xl. 9).

We have said that there was a third giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai, and as it stands intimately connected with the Gospel of type which we have been considering, we must not omit to notice it.

After Moses had held his forty days' converse "with the Angel that spake to him in Mount Sinai," he returned to the camp, and, finding the people engaged in the worship of the golden calf, cast the tables of the Law from his hands, and brake them beneath the mount (Exod. xxxii. 19). The act was probably not only a fruit of his righteous indignation at their sin, but an expressive sign that they had broken God's holy law. Judgment soon followed upon the offenders. Three thousand of the Israelites were slain; and then Moses intercedes with God, and "stands in the gap" to turn away His wrath. Succeeding in his intercession, he is emboldened to ask for a fuller manifestation of God's glory to himself, and receives the gracious reply, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee" (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19).

And now, by express invitation, he is once more upon the mountain, and the glorious One who had been both Angel Lawgiver and Angel Evangelist, passes by and makes a proclamation of His Name :— "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers

upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation" (Exod. xxxiv. 7). Thus did the Great Evangelist of Mount Sinai uphold the Law and yet reveal the Gospel; thus did He cause mercy and truth to meet together, righteousness and peace to kiss each other; thus did He harmonize the conflicting attributes of mercy and of justice.

And now observe that at the close of a second period of forty days—after all this glorious gospel of type had been revealed—after this gracious proclamation of the name of the Lord,—the Law, the same Law unaltered in a single letter or requirement, is once more entrusted to Moses by the Angel of the Lord; but with a solemn injunction that it should be kept within the most holy place, in the ark of the covenant, beneath the mercy seat, where with the blood of atonement above it, and the Shechinah of the Divine presence hovering over it, the unbroken tables of the Law might be magnified, and made honourable: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark." And Moses is careful to inform us that he obeyed this command: "I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be as the Lord commanded me" (Deut. x. 5).

How full of meaning and of consolation is all this! The Law and the Gospel standing side by side; the muttering thunder of the one stilled into sweet silence by the gentle voice of the other; and the Angel Evangelist of Mount Sinai proclaiming to the ages yet to come those glad tidings of peace and reconciliation of which He himself was to be the Centre and the Source. No marvel that the ancient Fathers of the Church should constantly speak of Christ as "The Instructor." Well may we exclaim with them, "Our Instructor is the holy God Jesus, the WORD, who is the Guide of the entire human race; Himself, the God who loveth man, is our Instructor." (Clem. Alex. Pœd. 1, 11, 109.) O Thou Prince of Preachers and Lord of Angels, "Thou art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are Thy lips, because God hath blessed Thee for ever."

"And doubt we yet? Thou call'st again,
A lower still, a sweeter strain;
A voice from Mercy's inmost shrine,
The very breath of Love divine.

"Whispering it says to each apart,
'Come unto Me, thou trembling heart!'
And we must hope, so sweet the tone,
The precious words are all our own."

KEBLE.

V.

THE ANGEL OF THE COVENANT.

It was not only upon Mount Sinai, and through the shadows of the ceremonial law, that the Angel Evangelist proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom. From the days of the patriarchs down to the close of the Old Testament Scriptures, the Messiah might be heard declaring, as it were, in the prophetic language of the fortieth Psalm, "Lo, I come:" and adding in the words that follow, "I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and truth from the great congregation."

This will be especially apparent, if we consider Him as "the Angel," or "Messenger of the Covenant," described by Malachi on the closing page of the older Revelation: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. iii. 1).

The word here translated "Messenger" is the same as "Angel," and both words indicate one sent to announce or perform some purpose of the person

who sends him. Malachi speaks of two messengers: one the harbinger of the other, and sent to prepare the way for Him; another the expected and glorious "Angel of the Covenant," who in due time was to appear in the flesh. The former is but a created messenger and a servant; the latter is uncreated and supreme. He is distinctly called "The LORD;" and that He can be none other than Christ himself is plain from the accompanying prediction: "He shall come to His temple." In a word, the text is a prophecy of Christ's first advent, and of John the Baptist's mission to prepare His way, by "turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just."

From all this it is plain that it was in relation to His incarnation and tabernacling amongst men, the title of "Angel of the Covenant" was given to the Son of God. He came in human flesh to announce and fulfil the terms of that everlasting covenant which had been arranged in the councils of the Blessed Trinity from all eternity, and by means of which salvation was to be brought to the guilty sons of men. The Old Testament times are not without remarkable anticipations of His glorious office. Here and there we catch glimpses of "the Angel of the Covenant" before He took human form, and observe foreshadowings of His redeeming love and great atonement long before His mysterious incarnation.

Let us go back to the days of Abraham. We

are expressly told by St. Paul that the Gospel was preached beforehand unto Abraham, when the blessed announcement was made to him concerning the promised seed, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. iii. 8). The same Apostle, in the same chapter, describes this same promise as "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ," and he argues that it is one which the Law (given to Moses "four hundred and thirty years after) cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

This promise of the great salvation was originally given to the patriarch when, at God's command, he left "his kindred and his father's house," and "went out, not knowing whither he went." But it was repeated and confirmed under very special circumstances, when with a still higher exercise of faith, and in obedience to another Divine command, he brought his only son to the mountains of Moriah to offer him up as a burnt-offering to the Lord. It was upon that occasion this covenant of grace was so solemnly renewed, and confirmed by the oath of the Almighty: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord," . . . "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 16—18).

But whose words are these? Plainly the words of the Almighty; and yet they are expressly said to be the words of "the Angel of the Lord." It was "the Angel of the Lord" that called unto Abraham

out of heaven the second time, and said (ver. 15), "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord." Thus we have not only "the Covenant" declared, but we have "the Angel of the Covenant" declaring and confirming it by an oath. It is Christ in His own person—the Son of God—that here appears upon the scene, the witness and the chief actor in the most memorable of those typical transactions which shadowed forth His own atoning death and sacrifice.

Surely in the whole compass of typical history, this scene on Mount Moriah is unparalleled for the clear and definite exhibition which it presents of "the offering of Christ once for all." In the surrender of that only and beloved son by that tender but still unflinching father, do we not see the still greater surrender made by the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in giving Him up for us all? In the patient and unresisting Isaac submitting to be bound and laid upon the altar as a sacrifice, do we not behold the more wondrous submission of the great Redeemer to death, "even the death of the cross," on our behalf? In the substitution of the ram—the guiltless animal in the place of the appointed human victim—can we not mark the vicarious sacrifice of the spotless "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world"? On all these things our minds have pondered again and again, and evermore with increasing wonder, and gratitude, and joy.

But does it not add to the marvel and mystery, that He whom all these things so wondrously prefigured, was Himself the chief Speaker and Actor in the scene? Does it not add new emphasis to the Apostle's words: "The Covenant confirmed before of God, in CHRIST"? (Gal. iii. 17.)

Observe how and when He is introduced to our notice in this memorable transaction. All was ready for the expected sacrifice: the altar was built; the wood upon it was laid in order; Isaac was bound and laid upon the altar on the wood; the gleaming knife had been unsheathed; it was grasped in Abraham's unswerving hand; it was lifted up to strike the fatal blow; when "the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And He (the Angel) said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from ME!"

Was it to a created angel that Abraham was about to offer up his child? Was not the surrender made to God himself? and was it not God himself who had demanded it, saying, "Take now thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of"? (Gen. xxii. 2.) And does not all this incontestably prove that this "Angel of the Covenant," who had been observing the whole of this

symbolical proceeding, and who interfered at the critical moment to save the life of Isaac, and reward the faith of Abraham, was Himself Divine, yea, was that "only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," and of whom it is expressly and exclusively said, "No man hath seen God at any time," . . . but "He hath declared Him"? (John i. 18.)

And all this is confirmed by the language in which the more than Angelic Messenger accosts Abraham from heaven "the second time." We have already quoted the words. He pledges the oath and verity of Jehovah to the patriarch, but He pledges them as His own—"By Myself have I sworn." He receives and rewards the obedience exhibited towards God as manifested towards Himself: "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son." He promises to do for "the father of the faithful" what none but God could accomplish: "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." He seals to him the Covenant of Redemption in the very words wherein Jehovah had long before announced it: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And He concludes the long catalogue of blessings by the memorable encomium, which none but Deity could dare to pronounce, "Because thou hast obeyed My voice" (Gen. xxii. 15—18).

Was it any marvel that Abraham called the

name of that place "Jehovah-jireh" (the Lord will see or provide)? "Moriah" means "the vision of God," and by a beautiful play upon the word, impossible to be conveyed in the English tongue, the patriarch assigns to it the new appellation of "Jehovah-jireh." The wondrous event which thus occurred in that hallowed spot gave rise to a remarkable proverb—"as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," or, more properly, "In the mount of Jehovah, He shall be seen" (Gen. xxii. 14). Did not Abraham by this new name attest his own deep conviction that it was more than an angel that spake to him? And do not the name, the place, and the events which occurred on this memorable spot suggest to us the deeper truth, that the very Saviour, of whom Isaac was the type, appeared there by anticipation, and in connection with this wonderful prophetic rehearsal of future and more sublime transactions?

But there is another point which throws additional interest around this appearance of the Angel of the Covenant. It has been generally supposed that the "land of Moriah" spoken of in Genesis was a general name for the whole region in the midst of which Jerusalem afterwards stood. The tradition of the Jews, referred to again and again by Josephus, assigns it to this locality; and the mention of Mount Moriah in the Book of Chronicles as the place where Solomon built the Temple, seems

to point definitely in the same direction,* "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father" (2 Chron. iii. 1). If this be so, the scene of our Lord's sufferings and death lay in the same region, possibly on the same "awful hill" that witnessed the offering up of Isaac, and the intervention of the Angel of the Covenant; and we are led to gaze in deeper wonder and astonished awe upon the "Mount of God" thus chosen in the ages long before, for those foreshadowing mysteries which in the fulness of time were to have their consummation and fulfilment upon the selfsame spot!

But whatever controversy may be raised as to the place, none, as we conceive, can be admitted as to the glorious Being whose presence lent to it such sacredness and interest. We recognize in "the Angel of the Lord," who spake to Abraham, and confirmed to him (in connection with that sacrificial scene) the glorious Covenant of Promise, none other than that Second Person of the Trinity, who was Himself the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. And oh! what grace, and dignity, and meaning it throws over the whole transaction, when we think of the future Christ as being the witness and herald of

* We know that this identity has been challenged, and that a claim has been set up on behalf of Mount Gerizim as the Moriah of Genesis (see *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, Art., "Gerizim and Moriah,") but we incline to the older and more generally received opinion.

the wondrous scene, which so clearly prefigured His great redemption! Think of Him beholding in typical enactment the very things which were to befall Himself when two thousand years of the world's history were to have passed away! Picture Him to your minds as He looked upon that only and well-beloved son bound as a willing sacrifice upon the altar by a father's hand, and ready to die the appointed death! Think of Him as he saw the blood of the substitute flowing from the wounded victim, and the dark doom of judgment passing away from him who had been "appointed unto death"! Oh! who can give expression to the thoughts that crowd upon our minds in the contemplation of such an hour: thoughts of His glorious work; thoughts of His redeeming cross; thoughts of His blood-bought Church; thoughts of the work that was set before Him; thoughts of the glory that was to be at length revealed? O blessed Jesus, as we ponder on all these things, we are lost in wonder at Thine unutterable love!

But it was not only the death, but the resurrection of Christ, which was prefigured in this scene. The inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews distinctly states that Abraham's faith was so strong, that he believed that even if he offered up his son at God's command, nevertheless in that very son the promise would be fulfilled, and that through him, or rather through the seed to spring from him, the world would be blessed—"accounting that God was

able to raise him from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure," or, as the word means, "in a type." If Abraham was "as good as dead" when Isaac was born to him, Isaac was "as good as dead" when he lay bound upon the altar awaiting the fatal blow; and from that virtual death he was restored to life and liberty by the voice of the Angel, who called to Abraham out of heaven, and arrested his uplifted arm. How striking, then, does this prophetic scene become, presenting as it does a perfect rehearsal so many thousands of years before, not only of the wondrous sacrifice enacted upon Calvary, but of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the grave. And how intensely interesting does all this scene appear when we find the Messiah himself superintending its details, and finally restoring Isaac to that very life which, as we have seen, was typical of His own resurrection from the dead.

We turn, in conclusion, to a consideration which connects itself closely with our subject. Our blessed Lord seems to indicate that there was something very peculiar and distinctive in Abraham's faith and spiritual apprehension. He says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John viii. 56). Does it indicate that as he had pre-eminent faith, so he was also blessed with pre-eminent illumination? May not the patriarch have been enabled to foresee in adoring wonder something like what we behold as we gaze

back upon this memorable past? What if the Spirit of the living God opened his eyes to behold "the day of Christ" in the transactions of that eventful morning, and thus rewarded and blessed his self-surrendering, all-submissive faith! We have reason to think, from the name which he gave the place, that he was enabled to distinguish Jehovah in the mysterious "Angel of the Covenant," who spake to him from heaven; may he not have been privileged beside to recognize in that Angel of the Covenant the promised seed, the great Messiah, in whom all the nations were to be blessed? And may he not have had some indications (beyond what were vouchsafed to other Old Testament saints) of the character of that Messiah's work, founded upon the transactions in which his faith had been so pre-eminently exercised?

Whether this be so or not, one thing is plain, that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day—rejoiced in "leaping forth to meet it" (as the word implies) when it was at a distance; and that to this joy of expectation was added yet another—a joy of realization, for his desires after Christ's day were met and satisfied by its being brought near—"he saw it and was glad." What a blessed thought it is that the Lord Jesus has ever been to His believing people "the Angel of the Covenant;" that before He came His people were looking for Him in expectation; that since He has come they look back to Him in love; and that they are now once more looking

forward to see Him yet again. And is it not a thought more blessed still, that He meets all their aspirations and desires, and satisfies them in Himself? As it was in the day of the resurrection,—"then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord;" so is it in all seasons when He reveals His goodness and His grace:

> "To them that seek Him He is good;
> To them that find Him, All in All."

And when Moriah and Calvary are exchanged for Zion and the New Jerusalem; when His people shall behold the King in His beauty, and see and dwell in the land that now is very far off; then they shall be satisfied, for they shall awake up after His likeness, and then they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is.

> "Prisoner of Hope thou art! look up and sing
> In hope of promised spring.
> As in the pit his father's darling lay
> Beside the desert way,
> And knew not how, but knew his God would save,
> Even from that living grave:
> So, buried with our Lord, we'll close our eyes
> To the decaying world, till angels bid us rise."
>
> CHRISTIAN YEAR.

VI.

THE ANGEL OF SACRIFICE.

ALREADY we have seen that the "Angel of the Lord" manifested Himself to the patriarchal age in connection with sacrifice. The scene upon Mount Moriah centred in that great act of faith, whereby Abraham showed his willingness to offer up his only and well-beloved son at God's command. It was the previous rehearsal in type, in the presence of the Son of God, of that more wondrous sacrifice, which He Himself was to offer in the fulness of time. But we have considered the offering of Isaac in connection with "the Covenant" of which it was the seal, rather than in relation to the atonement of which it was the antitype. Other passages in the Old Testament will bring out more distinctly this latter aspect of sacrifice, and present to us the Angel of the Lord, as being not only the Angel of the Covenant, but most expressly "the Angel of Sacrifice," identifying Himself with that ancient institution, and giving pledge and promise, even in those early times, of the transcendent blessings to which it pointed, and for which it prepared the way.

Two of these passages occur in the Book of

Judges, and are well worthy of our attention. We shall at present confine ourselves to the first of them. It is connected with the life of Gideon,—"the mighty man of valour," whom God raised up to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of Midian. His history and the mighty deeds wrought by him and his "three hundred," when with lamps and pitchers, and swords and trumpets, they fell upon the bewildered hosts of the enemy in the beginning of the middle watch, are too well known to need repetition here. But let us direct attention to the way in which this great deliverer was called to his office and prepared for his work.

Gideon, the son of Joash (as we read in the sixth chapter of Judges), was threshing wheat beside the winepress, his chief concern being how he might best hide it from the avarice of the Midianitish oppressors, when lo! an angel of the Lord came and sat under the oak which shadowed his father's homestead, and fixed his earnest gaze upon the laborious thresher. In words of deep and solemn significance the celestial messenger accosted the young Abi-ezrite: "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (ver. 12). Gideon, more concerned about the distresses of his countrymen than regardful of himself, immediately replies, "Oh, my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath

forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites" (ver. 13).

And now the style of the narrative changes; we are left no longer in doubt as to the character and dignity of Gideon's visitor. This is no mere Angel-messenger, but Jehovah himself that speaks to him under that angelic disguise, for "the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" That look was a look divine; that commission came direct from God; that imparted might came from no creature's hand; that assurance fell from no other lips than His, who alone could challenge the universe to frustrate it: "*Have not I sent thee?*"

And yet the son of Joash, whilst recognizing something superhuman in the speaker and the message, is hindered (as Moses was before him) by recollections of his own weakness and unworthiness, from at once embracing the divine commission and realizing its efficacy. He remembers that the tribe of Manasseh, to which he belonged, was not a leading one in Israel,—that the family, or "thousand," in it (see margin) from which he sprang, was struggling with poverty,—that he himself (so he humbly thought) was the least in his father's house; and with all this present to his mind he hesitatingly replies, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel?"

And now another proof is given that Gideon's

visitant is more than heavenly, yea, that He is supreme:—The LORD (it is as before, "Jehovah") said unto him, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man" (ver. 16). What presence but that of God himself could secure such victory? Was not this the very language in which the Almighty had commissioned Moses, and assured him of success, when He called him to be the Deliverer of Israel from another oppressor? "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" was the weak objection in that case; "Wherewith shall I save Israel?" was the equally distrustful one in this. "Certainly I will be with thee," was the all-sufficient promise in the one instance; "Surely I will be with thee," is the all-answering security in the other. These words alone reach beyond the sphere of an inferior angel. For, as Vitringa well observes, "to promise his grace and assistance for the accomplishment of such a work as Gideon had to perform, was not in the power of any but the true God." It is evident that the angel who was speaking to Gideon wished to be regarded as Jehovah.

Perhaps Gideon now remembered that God had vouchsafed to Moses special tokens of His favour, and proofs of His commission, and so for his own further satisfaction he asks for similar assurances to himself: "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, then show me a sign that Thou talkest with me," or rather "that it is THOU who talkest with me."

And then he is led (shall we not say divinely led?) to make a strange proposal: "Depart not hence, I pray Thee, until I come unto Thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before Thee" (ver. 18). It is remarkable that the word which Gideon uses to designate his intended "present" is a sacrificial word; it is "Minchâh," translated properly in the margin of our Bibles "meat-offering." Originally the word included any gift from an inferior to a superior, and when applied to offerings made to God, sometimes included both bloody and unbloody offerings. Under the Levitical law, however, the word came to have a special reference to offerings of the latter kind, and we find the ceremonial of the Minchâh laid down in the second chapter of Leviticus with great minuteness. It was to consist of fine flour seasoned with salt, and mixed with oil and frankincense, but without leaven, and was generally accompanied by a drink-offering. A portion of it, and all the frankincense, was to be burnt upon the altar as a memorial; the rest belonged to the priest.

The meaning of the Minchâh may "be exactly expressed in the words of David (1 Chron. xxix. 10–14), 'All that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; . . . All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.' It recognized the sovereignty of the Lord, and His bounty in giving them all earthly blessings, by dedicating to Him the best of His gifts: the flour as the main support of life; oil as the symbol of richness; and

wine as the symbol of vigour and refreshment (Ps. civ. 15). All these were unleavened, and seasoned with salt, in order to show their purity, and were hallowed by the frankincense for God's special service."

From all this it is plain that the principal element of sacrifice, namely, *atonement for sin*, did not come into the idea of a meat-offering; and for this reason we find that the Minchâh was always a subordinate and subsidiary offering, needing to be prefaced by a burnt-offering or a sin-offering, which would introduce the deeper and more important truth of atonement.

Now it is remarkable that when Gideon returns to "the Angel of the Lord," who had graciously consented to tarry for him, he brings his Minchâh, consisting of "unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour," and this he evidently intended as his offering of acknowledgment and reverence. It is true that he "made ready a kid," and "put the flesh in a basket," and some "broth in a pot," but these seem to have been intended rather for the refreshment of his heavenly guest than as possessing any sacrificial significance.

But the subsequent action of "the Angel of the Lord" gives a new character to all Gideon's preparations. When he brings out his offerings and presents them to the Angel under the oak, he is commanded to make such a disposition of them as proves that though the Angel tarried for his return, it was

not with a view to partaking of his repast. "The Angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so" (ver. 20). The pouring out of the broth, as if it were a drink-offering, seemed to intimate that the arrangement of the viands was not for a festival, but for a sacrifice.

Nor did the Heavenly Messenger keep Gideon long in suspense as to his meaning. The flesh is laid upon the rock; the Minchâh of unleavened cakes is beside it; the broth is poured out according to his divine direction: "Then the Angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight" (ver. 21).

O wondrous revelation! O instructive miracle! It is not by mere acknowledgment and dedication, but by atonement that God is to be approached. That kid is consumed as a burnt-offering to show what the sinner deserves, and to point out the need of some greater victim to bear and exhaust the wrath which sin entails. That meat-offering of respect and reverence can only find acceptance as it stands in connection with the life that has been laid down, and the sacrifice that has been made. This fire, so miraculously kindled, is at once the emblem of the justice which demands satisfaction for sin,

and of the mercy which accepts the offering that is able to take our guilt away. Can we not recognize in this prophetic scene, "The Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ"? Does He not stand revealed to us as being Himself that Angel Priest by whose atonement we are reconciled to God?

And the Angel of Sacrifice departing just as He had taught this lesson, what a revelation have we here! The whole scene was not only a confirmation to Gideon of the high commission which had just been entrusted to him, and in the strength of which he immediately went forth to overthrow the altar of Baal, and become "a saviour" to Israel; but it was meant to illustrate the deep meaning of that look of power with which, as we have read, (ver. 14), "the LORD looked upon him;" and by means of which he was enabled to go forth in this his might, and became a great deliverer. It must have helped him, as he pondered upon it in silent awe, to understand the force of that searching and assuring question, "Have not I sent thee?" and to realize the wondrous fact that it proceeded from the lips of Deity itself.

What impression was made upon Gideon's mind seems plain from the fact that when he perceived that it was "the angel of the Lord,"* he exclaimed,

* Our authorized version, by translating the words in the 22nd verse "*an angel of the Lord,*" instead of "*the angel of the Lord,*" as in the rest of the passage, has thrown an obscurity over its meaning. It is plainly the same Angel that is alluded o throughout.

"Alas! O Lord God, for because I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." He had asked a sign, and the Lord had given him one that removed all doubt as to the fact that it was Jehovah who had been talking to him. Like Hagar, and Jacob, and Manoah, who witnessed similar manifestations of the Almighty's power and presence, and thought them the presages of death, he thought that he must surely die as the immediate consequence of such a glorious vision, and was ready to exclaim in the language of the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone . . . for mine eyes have seen the King! the Lord of Hosts!" (Isa. vi. 5.) It needed an immediate assurance from the mouth of God himself to dissipate his fears, and accordingly we read, "The LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."

How this cheering message was conveyed to him we are not told. The Angel of Sacrifice had vanished from his sight, but it would seem as if, although unseen, He still was present in His divine power, and that it was this Angel of the Lord, and none other, that still spake to him. One thing is certain —that Gideon was deeply impressed both by the lesson of the sacrifice, and by the express revelation of Jehovah. On that very rock (ver. 26), which had been converted from a banqueting table into a place of atonement, he erected an altar, and distinguished it by a name which perpetuated from generation to generation the remembrance of this won-

drous scene:—"Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites" (ver. 24).

"The LORD send peace"; such was the meaning of the name given to the altar. It was a memorial and a prayer. In the place where he expected death, he met with life; and from the grace and favour there exhibited to himself, he drew a plea to ask for peace and blessing unto Israel. His Minchâh had been more than received; his offering had been more than accepted; the fire of God had converted it into a sacrifice even while it consumed it; and the sweet message of peace had come immediately afterwards to calm his troubled and affrighted heart. He had asked a sign of "grace," and the great Angel Priest had given it to him in the form of a sacrifice, which He touched with His own staff, as if to show that He himself, and not Gideon, was the offerer; and which He enkindled with His own fire, as if to intimate that the merit of it was all His own. With all we have seen heretofore of the manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, can we entertain a doubt that this "Angel of Sacrifice" was the Son of God himself? Who else could thus reveal God's way of peace to man, and open up such mysteries of grace? To use His own expressive words in the Gospel: "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 27).

It is worthy of note that again and again in the scene under review, Gideon addresses the Angel under a title which peculiarly belongs to Christ as the second Person in the Trinity—viz., "Adonai." The force of this is lost to the readers of the English Bible, in consequence of the translators having used the same word "Lord" as the translation both of "JEHOVAH" and "ADONAI." But the distinction is very strongly marked in the original, and the special application of the word "Adonai" to the Messiah can be clearly traced in many passages of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, in Isaiah vi. 1, 8, the prophet says, "I saw the ADONAI sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up: . . . Also, I heard the voice of the ADONAI, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It is to this passage, and its special reference to Christ, that the Evangelist alludes when he says, "These things said Esaias, when he saw *His* glory, and spake of *Him*" (John xii. 41). A still more remarkable illustration occurs in the 110th Psalm, 1st verse—"JEHOVAH said unto my ADONAI, Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."* This is a psalm which the Lord Jesus applies distinctly to Himself, as appears from three of the Evangelists: —Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42.

* It is remarkable that the Targum of Jonathan paraphrased these words thus: "The Lord said unto His Word, Sit thou on my right hand," etc.—See Bp. Bull, Def. Fid. Nic. Book i. c. i. 19.

Bishop Reynolds, in his exposition of this psalm, gives the following beautiful definition of the word ADONAI:—"Christ is LORD or ADONAI, in two respects: first, a *Lord in power* and strength: power to forgive sins; power to quicken whom He will; power to cleanse, justify, and sanctify; power to succour in temptations; power to raise from the dead; power to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him; power to hold fast His sheep; power to cast out the accuser of the brethren; power to put down all His enemies, and to subdue all things to Himself. Secondly, a *Lord in authority*: to judge, to anoint, to employ, to command, whom and what He will. He only is the *Lord* over our persons, over our faith, over our consciences. To Him only must we say, 'Lord, save us lest we perish;' to Him only must we say, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do?'"

How remarkable then it is that Gideon should repeatedly apply this title to the Angel of the Lord who appeared to him; and how full of meaning it is that the ADONAI, thus appearing to him, should seal His promises and ratify his peace by such an act of sacrifice! May we not well say, as we gaze on the whole transaction, "Behold, a greater than Gideon is here!"—yea, a greater than any created angel is here? May we not say, Here is the true and great Deliverer of men;—God's chosen and appointed Saviour to rescue us from the oppression of sin and Satan? Here, too, are the foreshadowings of that

great sacrifice in which the foundations of His work were laid, and the blessings of redemption secured to His people. Here in this enacted prophecy we have the peace which was made by the "blood of His cross;" and here, as if from heaven itself, does His voice of grace and comfort reach the ears of His servants, assuring them of life, and strength, and victory. Truly, as we ponder on this mysterious scene by the winepress at Ophrah, and look first on "the mighty man of valour," and then upon "the Angel of Sacrifice," we may well exclaim, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us" (Luke i. 68—71).

"O full of glory, full of grace,
Redeemer of a ruined race,
Beloved of the Father! come,
Make in these sinful hearts Thy home!

"Beloved of the Father, Thou
To whom the saints and angels bow!
Emmanuel, Jesus, Saviour, come—
Make in these sinful hearts Thy home!"

BONAR.

VII.

THE ANGEL OF INCARNATION.

THE Judges of Israel are designated in Scripture as "Saviours." Othniel, the first of them who is mentioned in the Book of Judges, is expressly so called (chap. iii. 9, margin), and Nehemiah in after times refers to them all under the same title:—"According to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies" (Neh. ix. 27). The last of them whose history is recorded in the book that bears their name was Samson, and in many respects he was the most eminent and remarkable of the whole series. Raised up to deliver Israel from their longest and deadliest enemies—the Philistines—he stood supreme amongst men of might as "the strongest of the strong." Indeed, it has been thought that all we read of Hercules in classic fable was but a dim tradition concerning this real warrior of the tribe of Dan.

This mighty man, who rent the lion in the vineyards of Tinmath "as he would have rent a kid"; this matchless giant, who with supernatural strength burst his bonds in Lehi as if they were

"flax that was burnt with fire"; this resistless warrior, who, single-handed, slew a thousand foemen "with the jawbone of an ass"; this unconquerable champion, who carried off the gates of Gaza, and placed them on the top of the hill of Hebron;—this was "a saviour" of no common stamp; and as we study his history we can scarcely help recognizing in him a type of that still greater and Almighty Deliverer who came in the fulness of time to save us from our spiritual enemies. Samson —"the little sun" (as his name signifies), was but a prototype of that greater Sun, the Sun of Righteousness, who goeth forth "as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race."

It has been frequently remarked, that as the greatest of Samson's victories was wrought in the moment of his death, so the grandest of Christ's victories was accomplished by His sufferings upon Calvary. If of the one it could be recorded that "the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life," so of the other and of His cross it has been written that "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. ii. 15). "So didst Thou, O blessed Saviour, our better Samson," says pious Bishop Hall, "conquer in dying; and, triumphing upon the chariot of the cross, didst lead captivity captive; the law, sin, death, hell, had never been vanquished but by Thy

death. All our life, liberty, and glory spring out of Thy most precious blood."

But we are not now so much concerned with the typical character of Samson's life as with the remarkable fact that "the Angel of the Lord," whom we have again and again identified with the Son of God, is brought into very remarkable connection with his history. Already we have seen Him as "the Angel of the Covenant," assuming a peculiar position, and taking a special interest in the prophetic scene upon Mount Moriah, which prefigured His own death and resurrection; now we shall find Him taking a deep and appropriate interest in the extraordinary birth of the last of Israel's warrior-judges, and throwing around it a meaning and intention which receive their full explanation from His own mysterious Incarnation.

How remarkable it is that some of those who were the most eminent types of Christ were born out of the common course of nature! Thus Isaac the child of promise, Joseph the favourite son of Jacob, Samuel the heaven-lent child of Hannah, and in the New Testament John the Baptist, the herald of the Messiah, were all given to their parents when the last hope of begetting children had passed away from them. Nor was it otherwise with the birth of Samson, whose parents had long since given up all prospect of having a child.

But who is to announce to Manoah's wife the glad tidings that she shall have a son? It is not a

prophet, as in the case of Hannah, nor even an exalted angel, as in the case of Zacharias, but this divine "Angel of the Lord," who more than all the prophets on earth, or all the angels in heaven, was interested in the strange event. Just as the LORD himself appeared to Abraham,* and announced the tidings that he should have a seed in whom all the world should be blessed, so this "Angel of the Incarnation," as we may well describe Him, appeared unto the woman of Zorah, and said unto her, "Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son" (Judges xiii. 3).

We can well imagine the joy of such an announcement to the childless wife of Manoah, and how the universal hope that lived in every Jewish matron's breast now fluttered in her bosom—the hope that possibly she herself might be the favoured one that would bring forth "the seed of the woman." And there was something in the subsequent message of the angel that, if it did not strengthen this expectation, at least assured her that the child thus marvellously promised by the celestial messenger was one, whom all her nation would one day hail with

* A careful examination of Genesis xviii. will show that in this instance, also, it was "the Angel of the Lord" who appeared to Abraham, and announced beforehand the birth of Isaac. We hope to direct attention to that interview in a future chapter, but only refer to it here as a parallel, foreshadowing (as Samson's birth did) the nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and illustrating the marvel of it long before it took place.

acclamation as their redeemer from countless wrongs: "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." (ver. 5). We can read the promise now in clearer light; we can see that, even as regarded the earthly enemies of Israel, Samson only "began to deliver" his people from an oppression which continued long after his death, and the spirit of which extended even into the times of the Jewish monarchy; and in seeing this we can gather the deeper truth that Samson was but the figure of ONE mightier than himself.

She lost no time in communicating the strange intelligence to her astonished husband, and in doing this she uses language that is very significant. She speaks of the Angel as if he appeared to her in human form, for she calls him "a man of God"; but she adds a description which proves how far beyond the sons of men in form and mien this celestial visitor really was: "His countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God,* very terrible"; that is, very full of majesty and awe, such as we may well suppose was the face of the "man clothed in linen" whom Daniel saw by the river Hiddekel; or as the countenance of the Son of Man whom the favoured evangelist beheld in the Isle of Patmos. It is no marvel to hear her say, as she

* If we render her words thus:—"The Angel of God," it will justify Canon Liddon's remark, "She thus speaks of the Angel as of a Being already known to Israel."—*Bampton Lectures*, p. 54.

described his mysterious glory, "I asked him not whence he was," and it will be no marvel to us as we proceed that she adds, "neither told he me his NAME!" (ver. 6).

Manoah seems to have realized and believed the wondrous message, though as yet he only had received it from the lips of his wife. Unlike Zacharias (who doubted and was struck dumb) he grasped the truth with all his heart, and like the Father of the faithful, when a similar blessing had been announced to him, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Presently we find Manoah on his knees, and the language of his prayer expresses at once his confidence and his docility: "O my LORD, let the Man of God which Thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born" (ver. 8).

His prayer was soon answered: "The Angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field," and instantly she hastens home to communicate the tidings to her husband. "And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? and he said, I am. And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?" Are we not reminded, as we read those words, of the simple, submissive faith which, under circumstances still more peculiar, but yet strangely

similar, exclaimed, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word"? (Luke i. 38). Manoah and Manoah's wife seem, in their place, to have anticipated the confidence and docility exhibited by Joseph and Mary, when the Angel of the Lord announced to them a birth more wonderful and a Saviour more exalted.

"How shall we order the child?" or, as the margin renders it, "What shall be the manner of the child?" It was a question which naturally arose out of the Angel's previous communication. It reminds us of a similar question which was asked in the New Testament concerning another strangely-born and predicted son: "What manner of child shall this be?"

"How shall we do unto him?" or, rather, "What shall he do?" "What shall be his work?" (margin). The circumstances were so marvellous, that they might well elicit such inquiries—inquiries which forcibly indicated the unutterable and undefined expectations of those who asked them. But do we not feel that we are drawing near to a deeper mystery, and that under the eventful birth of Samson lies hidden another and more wondrous Nativity? It will unfold itself as we proceed.

The Angel now repeats to Manoah certain instructions which on the previous occasion he had given to his wife; and these instructions are grounded upon the fact that the child was to "be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his

death" (ver. 7). The order of the Nazarites had been already established, and is described at large in the Mosaic law. It denoted, as the word indeed signifies, a *separation* from the rest of the nation to a higher and more entire consecration unto God. This was indicated by certain external acts and signs, the chief of which were abstinence from all intoxicating drink, avoiding contact with the dead, and allowing the hair to remain unshorn till the expiration of the vow. In the sixth chapter of Numbers the law of the Nazarite as well as the ceremonies appropriate to the conclusion of his vow are fully recorded.

Samson was to be an illustrious member of this hallowed fraternity; and it was only in connection with his perpetual observance of its vows that the Spirit of the Lord was to move him to mighty deeds, and make him his country's greatest champion, and Israel's mightiest judge. Let those sweeping locks that hang over his broad shoulders be once cut off from his shaggy head, and he becomes weak as any other mortal man. Even the mother of one designated to such high emprise must in some sort conform to the law of the Nazarite until her child is born, and therefore "the Angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe" (ver. 14).

Nothing of this sort was required of the mothers of the Nazarites in ordinary cases, nor was the Nazarite's vow of separation binding for life. As that vow was voluntary in its inception, so also it was limited in its duration. But everything in this instance points to something infinitely more important than the career of Israel's earthly deliverer. Does not the whole solemnity of this yet unborn child's inauguration to office and to conflict carry us on to the time when another angel, predicting the birth of Christ's forerunner, proclaims it in the remarkable words, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb"? (Luke i. 15). And do not our thoughts go onwards still to another and more wondrous Child, "holy, harmless, undefiled," whose sanctification was in the loftiest sense what Samson's and the Baptist's were only in type and measure, and concerning whom another angel said to the Virgin of Nazareth, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"? (Luke i. 35).

But the revelation waxes clearer. The conduct of the Angel soon reveals to us why he took such an absorbing interest in all that concerned the birth and nurture of the promised child. Manoah, not recognizing as yet the dignity of the heavenly

ambassador, would detain him as a guest; but the Angel declines the hospitality offered to him as a man, and directs Manoah's thoughts to sacrifice and to God: "Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD." Checked in his purpose, and anxious now to discover, if possible, the real character of the strange visitant, Manoah asks, "What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?" (ver. 17). And now comes a mysterious question by way of answer: "The Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is Secret?" (ver. 18). "In the same manner," says Studer, "Jehovah refused to tell His name to Jacob, who was wrestling with Him, either because it was too holy to be uttered, or out of consideration for mortal man, who is afraid of death, whenever he comes into personal contact with the Divine Being. A name of infinite glory, wonderful, surpassing the powers of human conception, would not profit a created being." And it is remarkable, that what is stated here of the Angel is also affirmed of Christ in Rev. xix. 12: "He had a name written that no man knew but He himself."

If we glance at the margin of our Bible, we shall see that instead of "it is SECRET," the reading is, "it is WONDERFUL." This carries us forward at once to that most sublime prophecy of the Incarnation in Isaiah ix. 6, where it is written, "For unto

us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be on His shoulder: and His name shall be called WONDERFUL, Counsellor,* the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Thus does "the Angel of the Lord" assume to Himself the very title whereby in after times the Messiah was to be distinguished. Viewed in the light of Isaiah's Messianic prophecy and its New Testament fulfilment, we may thus paraphrase the Angel's words: "Why askest thou after my name? it is WONDERFUL. My whole nature is wonderful; it is of unfathomable depth, and cannot therefore be expressed by any human name; but it shall be more clearly revealed when ONE to whom this name pre-eminently belongs, and of whom your child shall be at once the type and pledge, is born into the world."

Manoah and his wife could not understand all this; but surely we, as we gaze on this Angel of the Incarnation, and listen to his suggestive words, cannot help exclaiming, "Is not this the Christ?" Is not this He of whom it is written, "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew but He himself"? (Rev. xix. 12). Can we not now understand the higher reasons for Samson's mysterious birth, and Nazarite life, and supernatural achievements, and wonder-working death? And do

* It is remarkable that the LXX. render this by Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος, "the Angel of wonderful counsel."

we not see special reasons why the Mighty Son of God should thus anticipate the time of His own wondrous nativity, and take pleasure in arranging and announcing all the circumstances connected with the marvellous birth and life-long consecration of this Judge and Saviour, who was so eminently to prefigure Himself?

But if the story carries us to the Incarnation, it carries us yet farther. Manoah, acting upon the Angel's intimation, places his sacrifice upon a rock, and his meat-offering beside it; and then the miracle that occurred in Gideon's case is repeated and surpassed; for "the Angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on" (ver. 19). Fire kindled, as in the previous event at Ophrah, by no earthly hand, fastens upon the offerings, and indicates their acceptance; but there was something more wondrous still, for we read, "when the flame vent up toward heaven from off the altar, that the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground" (ver. 20). In every analogous case in the Old Testament it is God himself who performs this miracle. The Angel acted as God was accustomed to act during the whole of Old Testament economy.

What a revelation of the WONDERFUL ONE have we here! How closely the Incarnation and the Atonement are linked together in this prophetic scene; the one being the preface, the other the

completion of the mystery! And this Angel with the secret name passing up to heaven amid the smoke and flame of his own sacrifice, what an illustration, what an anticipation it affords of the glorious resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, when (having offered up, as our great High Priest, His one sacrifice for sin) He entered with it "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us"!

But the most wondrous and overpowering thought of all is this—that it was the Son of God, the expected Saviour, our Saviour who has come, our Judge who will appear, that manifested Himself to this faithful pair, and moved upwards from them in that sacrificial flame, leaving Manoah to exclaim, "We shall surely die, because we have seen GOD!" (ver. 22). This is the thought that gives sublimity and intensity of meaning to the whole transaction. This is the fact which gives reassurance to our souls, as we gaze up steadfastly into heaven, and think in awe and wonder upon the overpowering scene. It is with this thought present to our hearts we adopt the language of Manoah's wife, and say, "If the LORD were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, nor would He have showed us all these things, nor would He as at this time have told us such things as these" (ver. 23). Remembering her words, and realizing their deep meaning, we feel ready to exclaim, "O woman, great is thy faith!" and to add, each one for himself, "Lord, I believe;

help Thou mine unbelief!" Like Manoah, we would know in our inmost hearts the mystery and the meaning of the Saviour's name; and, like his wife, we would draw a blessed argument of comfort from His great displays of grace and mercy.

> "We see Him come, and know Him ours,
> Who with His sunshine and His showers
> Turns all the patient ground to flowers.
> The Darling of the world is come,
> And fit it is we find a room
> To welcome Him. The nobler part
> Of all the house here, is the heart."
>
> HERRICK.

VIII.

THE ANGEL MEDIATOR.

Our previous contemplations of Christ as "the Angel of the Lord" have prepared us for considering Him in a more special aspect—as the Mediator of His Church. We have already seen Him foreshadowing the great events of His own life on earth, and the various offices of His Messiahship. The Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Ascension into Heaven, have all stood out before us in these Old Testament Theophanies. We have beheld the Angel of the Lord, whose delights were even then "with the sons of men," identifying Himself with the Law and the Gospel, with service and with sacrifice, with the guardianship and instruction of His Church from the beginning of the world.

In all these particulars the Second Person of the Trinity was gradually unfolding the work which in the fulness of time He was to fulfil, and illustrating beforehand those mediatorial services which He was eventually to accomplish. But now we are to view this mediatorial work as exhibited in another aspect,

and to catch prophetic glimpses of His present office as our Mediator at the right hand of God.

The declaration of St. Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy, c. ii. 5, that as "there is one God," so is there also but "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," would of itself prepare us to expect some such pre-manifestation of Christ even in the Old Testament Scriptures. It establishes the great principle that, in the dealings of God with sinful men, there is but one medium of communication, one meeting-place, one Advocate between us and Him, and that this common centre is only to be found in His beloved Son. This is as true of the times of the patriarchs as it is of the days of the apostles, and has its illustrations as well in the life of Abraham as of St. Paul. Ever since man fell he has stood in need of a Mediator through whom he may come to God; and there is only one Daysman who can lay his hand upon them both.

The prophet Hosea in a remarkable passage, speaking of Jacob, says, "By his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto Him: He found him in Bethel, and there He spake with us; even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial" (chap. xii. 3—5). Observe the clear and undeniable intimations which are given here as to the deity and majesty of this "Angel of the Lord." They precede and they follow the reference to Jacob's intercourse with Him; they overlie and

they underlie the mention of the Angel, lest any doubt should arise or remain as to His character and Godhead. If Jacob is said to have "had power over the Angel," it is first premised that "he had power with God;" and this at once establishes the identity of God with the Angel. If it is said that the Angel "found him in Bethel," it is immediately added that He not only spake to Jacob there but to us, and that He who thus spake to him and still speaks to us in the transaction is "the Lord God of Hosts." This places the divinity of the Angel who appeared at Bethel beyond all controversy, and leads us at once to the conclusion, established, as we have seen, by so many other instances, that He was the Son of God, the Second Person in the blessed Trinity. The prophet speaks of the transaction as an event well known to his countrymen, and of the Angel's deity as a thing well understood and recognized by them, so that the passage furnishes a proof that these manifestations of God in the person of this Angel were recognized by the Jews long before the Messiah came into the world.

Two distinct events of Jacob's history are alluded to in the passage—his wrestling with the Angel, and the Angel finding him at Bethel. But the prophet transposes them: the latter came first in point of time, when Jacob was fleeing from his brother Esau; the former came last, when he was returning over the brook Jabbok to meet him. Let us consider them in their chronological order.

The 28th chapter of Genesis brings us to the scene at Bethel. We have already adverted to it when speaking of Christ as "the Guardian Angel," who delivered Jacob from all evil; we glance at it now to see its relation to Him as "the Angel Mediator." This Angel, the same with whom he afterwards wrestled, found him at Bethel—found him faint and weary, trembling and overpowered with terror and fatigue—found him on his earthen couch and with his stony pillow, and "there He spake with him"; yea, "there He spake with us," says the prophet, revealing His character and love to all the Israel of God.

It was on this occasion that Jacob, in a vision of the night, beheld "a ladder set up from earth to heaven," and saw "the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (ver. 12). Now it is remarkable that in the account preserved to us in Genesis, though mention is made of the angels, we have no express mention of "the Angel" whom Hosea so distinctly describes as the chief actor in this scene. But if "the Angel" is not expressly described by that name, He is set forth under another, even under His higher and holier designation, JEHOVAH—for "the LORD stood above" the ladder, and from thence addressed the patriarch who slumbered at its foot, giving him gracious assurances of care and protection; renewing to him there not only the promises concerning the land of Canaan and his own posterity, but that higher, better promise con-

cerning "the seed" in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

We remember our Lord's significant allusion to this vision when He said to Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John i. 51). Thus plainly does Christ apply the type to Himself, and indicate that He was the medium of communication between God and men. For, observe, it was not the angels upon the ladder who typified the Mediator, but the ladder itself. They were not the means of communication between earth and heaven, but the ladder was; and when we behold "the Angel of God"—even Jehovah—at the top of the ladder, and hear Him revealing His mercy to the patriarch from thence, we see type and antitype meeting together, and gather the meaning of this vision.

Was that ladder one? So is Christ. Was its top in heaven and its foot on earth? So did His human nature belong to earth; so did His divine to heaven. Did it reach from men below, guilty and afraid, to God above, all glorious and gracious? So does the mediation of the Lord Jesus connect the two extremes of man's misery and God's mercy. In the dream of Jacob all access to heaven was limited to that one way, a way which even angels loved to tread, and in the gospel of divine grace there is no other way revealed whereby we may

draw near to God, for Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." Let not, then, the believer fear to place his foot upon the ladder, and to mount by means of it to heaven. The Angel of Mediation, who is Himself "the way," has pointed out and sanctioned this one and only mode of communication with His Father. And it is cheering and instructive, as we contemplate this memorable scene, to behold the One Mediator between God and men thus early indicating the way of access unto God, and by His own presence and teaching at Bethel anticipating the great central truth of His glorious mediation.

We cannot pass away from this part of the subject without noticing the very opposite teaching upon this subject which characterizes the Church of Rome. With her the mediation of saints and angels is appended to that of Christ himself, and in the writings of some of her most eminent divines it is actually placed above it. Thus in *The Glories of Mary*, by Saint Alphonsus Liguori, we have the following:—

"We read in the *Chronicles of St. Francis*, that brother Leo once saw in a vision two ladders, one red, at the summit of which was Jesus Christ; and the other white, at the top of which presided His beloved mother. He observed that many who endeavoured to ascend the first ladder, after mounting a few steps, fell down; and, on trying again, were

equally unsuccessful, so that they never attained the summit; but a voice having told them to make trial of the white ladder, they soon gained the top, the Blessed Virgin having held forth her hands to help them!"

Turning to other pages of the same volume, we find the teaching which this vision is intended to enforce, and it is embodied in the form of prayers to the Virgin Mary herself, *e.g.* :—"Dispensatory of divine grace, *you save whom you please;* to you, then, I commit myself, that the enemy may not destroy me." . . . "We hope for *grace and salvation* from *you;* and since you need but say the word, ah! do so; *you shall* be heard, and *we shall be saved!*"

And not only have we thus a preference implied for the mediation of the Virgin above that of Christ, but we have this preference distinctly stated and justified by the following passage:—"St. Anselm, to increase our confidence in Mary, assures us that our prayers will often be *more speedily* heard, in invoking *her* name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ." Such statements need only to be given in the language of those who make them, in order to show how antagonistic they are to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and detrimental to the honour of the great and only Mediator between God and men. Nothing, surely, can be more opposed than the teaching of the two visions—that of Jacob, which we have just considered, and that of brother Leo, as above described.

But we come to the other scene in Jacob's history alluded to by Hosea. He tells us that the patriarch "had power over the Angel and prevailed," and he explains the character of that victory by adding "he had power with God." This brings us to the night-scene by the brook of Jabbok, when "Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (Gen. xxxii. 24). The being who is here described as a man is declared by the prophet to be an Angel; nay, as the same Angel whom Jacob met at Bethel, and therefore none else than that glorious Mediator who, in after times, was to come in our nature, and to unite in Himself the human and divine.

This Angel, who came to Jacob in the midnight hour by the lonely brook, revealed Himself to the patriarch in an unmistakable way. If we turn to the beginning of the chapter we find (ver. 1) that as Jacob returned, at God's command, to Canaan, "The angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim," or, as the word signifies, "two hosts or camps." This guard of angels was, no doubt, intended to comfort and assure him in his season of perplexity and danger. He was about to meet his wronged and offended brother, from whose wrath, in long years gone by, he had to fly, and concerning whose present dispositions towards him he had grievous apprehensions. In this emergency he betook himself to

prayer (vers. 9—11), and having besought deliverance from God, and pleaded His gracious promises, sends forward his servants with conciliatory messages and presents to Esau, and after them he sends his wives and children across the brook Jabbok, remaining himself behind to pour out his soul again in supplication before God.

It was at this juncture the mysterious messenger from heaven met him in that solitary spot, and at that dark and anxious hour. Angels had met him on his way, and the sight of them had comforted his heart, but now One greater than angels came to him to give him stronger consolation: "there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day,"—one like himself, for he was a man; but one infinitely above himself, as both His acts and His words declared.

If Jacob "had power over the Angel and prevailed," it is plain that the victory vouchsafed to him in this mysterious conflict was one rather vouchsafed to his importunity, than won by his own strength. The wrestling lasted, indeed, until the morning dawned, but then one touch from the Angel's hand left the patriarch lame and disabled for life, and showed that, had his mighty opponent so desired, He might have terminated in a moment, and at the very outset, the unequal strife.

The language of the patriarch plainly indicates that this night-long struggle by the brook Jabbok was rather of a spiritual than of a physical character,

and that whatever there was in it of the latter kind was but symbolical of the former. Even when lamed and halting under the paralyzing touch of the mighty ONE, he still refuses to discontinue the conflict. "Let me go," exclaims the Angel, "for the day breaketh." "I will not let thee go," replies the maimed but unvanquished suppliant, "except thou bless me" (ver. 26). It was blessing rather than victory which Jacob sought, and he sought it with all the earnestness and persistence of a man who felt that he was in the presence and held the grasp of a Being who could bestow it.

The majesty and divinity of this almighty wrestler are further evidenced by what follows. In remembrance of Jacob's victory, a victory won by holy earnestness and unceasing prayer, the Angel confers upon him a new and illustrious name: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel:" that is, a Prince of God, "for as a Prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (ver. 28). And to this distinguishing name the Angel added another token of heavenly favour, and it was the very token which the patriarch had asked,—"He blessed him there" (ver. 29). Both the name imposed and the blessing bestowed prove the authority and divinity of Him who conferred them.

No marvel that Jacob should wish to know who this unearthly, and more than angel visitant could be; so mighty and yet so condescending, so lowly

and yet claiming such exalted powers. The Angel knew the patriarch, and called him by his name; but the patriarch was anxious to be more fully informed as to the name and nature of his gracious combatant: "And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, thy name." This information, however, is not vouchsafed. The Angel replies, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" But although the Angel did not announce His name, He gave His blessing to the patriarch, and by that act, coupled with all that preceded it, left no further room for doubt upon Jacob's mind, for he "called the name of the place Peniel" (*i.e.*, the face of God), and said, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Thus did the new name given to the place perpetuate for ever the remembrance of that mysterious interview between the suppliant patriarch and the Great Angel Mediator.

Thus at Bethel and at Jabbok we have a revelation of the future Mediator. In the one case we have a clear foreshadowing of that "new and living way" by which men may come to God; in the other a most suggestive intimation of the manner in which that way is to be trod. And in both instances it is Christ himself who comes to unfold the mysteries of His grace: here, at the top of that celestial ladder, which typified Himself; there, in the person of that mysterious wrestler, who suffered his prayerful servant to prevail.

How full of glory and of grace is this Mediator-

ship of Christ! What views are presented to us even in these symbolic representations of His majesty and love! He opens a path to heaven for the guilty and alarmed soul, and He condescends to strive with "the worm Jacob" for his good. In our darkness and exile He opens our eyes to behold Himself as the glorious Mediator between God and men; in our midnight of agony and fear He wrestles with us by His Spirit and His grace, in order to reveal His love, and to bless us in the end.

Though sometimes seeming to be our adversary, He is evermore our friend. That hand which lamed Jacob for his life, and thus convinced him of his own impotency, was laid upon him in blessing and in honour; and so the power which convinces us of sin, and humbles us to the dust, crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Why should that pilgrim faint who has caught glimpses of an open heaven and its golden gates, and Jesus standing there to receive him? Why should that warrior fear who has wrestled with Omnipotence and been permitted to prevail? He may be weak and "halting on his thigh," but still to him it may be said, "Thou hast power with God!"

What practical lessons, also, may be gathered from these manifestations of the Angel Mediator! What inducements to draw near unto God through Christ! What encouragements to those who "stir up their strength" to lay hold upon Him! In Jacob we behold a mixture of courage and of tenderness—

he wrestled like a champion, he wept like a child. How do his tears, and struggles, and entreaties, reprove our cold and feeble supplications. Did we but imitate his earnestness in prayer, and his perseverance in seeking for a blessing, how often would we, too, have our Bethels and our Peniels; how often would the day break upon us in mercy and the sun shine in upon us in love! Our language again and again might be, "Surely God is in this place"; and we might end many a night of sorrow and hour of conflict by exclaiming, "I have seen God face to face!"

"In vain Thou strugglest to get free;
I never will unloose my held!
Art Thou the Man that died for me?
The secret of Thy love unfold.
Wrestling, I will not let Thee go
Till I Thy name, Thy nature know!

"Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair!
Speak to my heart—in blessings speak!
Be conquered by mine instant prayer!
Speak—or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy name is Love!

"'Tis love! 'tis love! Thou diedst for me
I hear Thy whisper in my heart!
The morning breaks, the shadows flee—
Pure, universal Love Thou art!
To me, to all, Thy mercies move;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love!"

WESLEY.

IX.

THE ANGEL OF INTERCESSION.

In our last chapter we saw how Christ manifested Himself in the patriarchal times as the Angel Mediator, and shadowed forth the glorious office which, in "the fulness of time," He was to occupy between God and men. Our present chapter deals with another branch of the same subject, and introduces us to the intercessory work of the Lord Jesus as anticipated and illustrated by Himself in the Old Testament times. We shall consider two passages —one in Genesis and the other in Zechariah—which furnish a very graphic picture of this portion of our Saviour's mediatorship.

In the 18th and 19th chapters of Genesis are recorded two distinct but connected occurrences which appear to have taken place upon the same day. The one was a visit of celestial beings to Abraham at Mamre, and the other a visit to Lot at Sodom. The one took place at mid-day, as Abraham "sat in the tent door in the heat of the day"; the other at even, as Lot "sat in the gate" of the city. In the former case there were three of these angelic visitors, in the latter only two; and it is plain from

the narrative, that the two who in the 19th chapter are called "angels," were amongst the three who in the 18th chapter are called "men." Two of the three who came in human form to Abraham's tent appear to have left their mysterious companion behind them, when they went upon their two-fold errand—of mercy to Lot, and of destruction to the cities of the plain; and the language in which this remaining angel is spoken of, as distinguished from them, proves that whilst *they* were only angels in human form, *He* was more than an angel, yea, that He was Divine: "The men turned their faces from thence and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the LORD." This angel, then, who tarried behind in human form was Jehovah; and as we have seen reason in other cases, so we shall see ground to conclude in this, that He was the Son of God. It was doubtless from having taken this view of the subject, the compilers of our Lectionary (both the original and revised one) selected the 18th chapter of Genesis as a proper lesson for Trinity Sunday; not indeed that they considered the three men who appeared to Abraham as being impersonations of the three persons in the Trinity (a supposition for which there is no ground), but that they rightly concluded that the one who remained behind at Mamre was the second person in the Triune Jehovah.

It is interesting to note that the visit of the three to Abraham was connected with the promise which

had been already made to him, that he should have a son. This promise, already repeated on three distinct occasions (see chap. xii. 2, xv. 3, xvii. 19), was now to be more significantly confirmed by the Lord himself in human form. The same glorious Being who, as we have seen in a former chapter, manifested such intense interest in the birth of Samson, the future saviour and judge of Israel, was now exhibiting an earlier and very significant interest in the approaching birth of Isaac, the promised seed and type of the Messiah. As in that case, so in this, the future Christ assumes, beforehand, the human form; and, appearing therein, gives pledge and promise concerning the child that is to be born in such a wondrous and unexpected way. It is He alone, and not the other two, who announces the promise to Abraham that Sarah shall have a son. It is He who rebukes her for her hidden unbelief when she laughed behind Him in the tent door; it is He who asks the convincing question: "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" and then gives the cheering assurance which at once reveals His Divine character and seals His Divine promise: "At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (ver. 14). Thus was the future Christ shadowing forth in human form, and by this gracious promise, His own future incarnation.

You will observe that although three men appeared to Abraham, yet from the very outset he

clearly distinguishes one of them from the rest; addresses all his conversation to Him, and evidently treats Him as superior to the others: "He lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him:" and he said, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant" (ver. 3). In the next chapter, where Lot has to deal with the other two who went to Sodom, he addresses them both and speaks to them as equal to each other: "Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the ground; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house" (chap. xix. 1, 2).* In the previous case it is one of the three who always speaks; in the latter case everything comes from both visitors equally. They speak of themselves as mere messengers of God, and of their errand as only a commission from Him:

* It is true that in verse 18, Lot uses the expression, "Oh, not so, my Lord;" but, as it has been well remarked, this solitary case proves that it was anything but customary to employ such a mode of address. The fact requiring explanation is not, that in one particular instance in which the Angel of the Lord is mentioned, the Lord himself is spoken of immediately afterwards; but that, *as a rule, there is an immediate transition from the Angel of the Lord to Jehovah or Elohim, and vice versa.* Calvin observes that although Lot "sees two, he directs his words to one; from which we may infer that the mind of Lot does not rest upon the Angels, for he is fully persuaded that they do not possess supreme power, and that his safety is not in their hands. He uses their faces as a mirror in which to contemplate the face of God."

"The LORD hath sent us to destroy it:" whereas the ONE who speaks to Abraham, and who remains with him, and receives his intercession for the city, after they have left, speaks in another and loftier tone: "At the time appointed I will return unto thee" (ver. 14); "I will certainly return unto thee," and "Sarah thy wife shall have a son" (ver. 10).

But more than this, He is distinctively and repeatedly designated in the chapter by the name of "Jehovah." It is "the LORD," *i.e.*, Jehovah, who gives to Abraham the promise of Isaac's birth (ver. 13). It is "the LORD" who says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (ver. 17). It is "the LORD" who is represented as going down (vers. 20, 21) to see the state of the guilty cities of the plain. It was "before the LORD" that Abraham continued to stand (ver. 22), when the two men "turned their faces from thence and went towards Sodom." It was with "the LORD" that the patriarch pleaded again and again on behalf of the city thus doomed to ruin; and it was "the LORD" who, as we are expressly told in the last verse of the chapter, "went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham."

It seems probable, from chapter xix. 24, that after this Divine Angel had heard Abraham's intercession, He followed the two other angels who had gone to Sodom, and then entered upon His work, "His strange work," of judgment and destruction. The intercession had plainly taken place in the

afternoon, when the heat of the day was passed; the burning of the cities did not take place till the following morning: "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." The words clearly indicate the action of two distinct persons, to each of whom the name of "Jehovah" (or LORD) is appropriated, and who act together in the most thorough concert and unity. It is startling to find the same Being who on the previous day had graciously accepted the patriarch's plea on account of the "righteous ten," now dealing in judgment with the guilty cities where not even these ten could be found; and the narrative notes the significant fact that it was from the very spot where Abraham offered up his intercession that he beheld, at the succeeding dawn, the fiery overthrow of the wicked: "Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (chap. xix. 27, 28).

We shall see in a subsequent chapter that "the Angel of the LORD" appeared (as on this so upon other occasions) as the adversary of God's enemies, but at present we are concerned with His more congenial and blessed work of mercy. And in the narrative before us we get a striking glimpse of our

great Mediator, appearing as the Angel of Intercession, and showing by anticipation His deep interest in the gracious work of advocacy which was to be afterwards His own. The two angels had left on their double errand—to save Lot, and to overthrow the city; but the third, the "Angel of the Lord," remained behind in company with His faithful servant; and why? To hear his prayers for the guilty; to listen to and accept his earnest entreaties on behalf of the wretched inhabitants; to allow Himself to be overcome, as it were, again and again by the ever-narrowing circles of Abraham's intercession on their behalf. The patriarch's first plea is for the "fifty righteous' sake" who may be found there; then it is for the "forty-and-five, if five should be lacking of the fifty;" then it is for "the forty's sake" who possibly may be discovered; then with increasing earnestness it is for "the thirty's sake" who, peradventure, may be found there; then it is with more intense desire for "the twenty" whose presence he dares to calculate upon; and then his last plea concentrates all the agony of an absorbing interest, which stakes its last request upon the presence of "the ten," whom, as the lowest limit of his hope, he makes the ground of his supplication: "Oh! let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And He said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (chap. xviii. 32).

Abraham in this case was the intercessor, but a

greater than Abraham was here! The patience, the forbearance, the compassion that waited thus to be entreated; the love, the condescension, and the grace that lingered on as if delighting in mercy; these speak to us of another Intercessor, the true "Mediator between God and men." Abraham was interceding with the great Intercessor; and thus we have at once the type and the antitype; we have a sample of the advocacy which Christ presents, and we have a pledge of the manner in which it is accepted. We have in this memorable scene a pre-enacted prophecy of what our great Intercessor ever liveth to accomplish for us; and we have that glorious Advocate exhibiting here, by anticipation, His interest in the blessed and peculiar office which was to be eventually His own. How wonderful it is, and how suggestive to find this "Angel of the Lord" commencing His interview with Abraham by making promise of a son, in whom the everlasting covenant should be established (ver. 19), and closing that interview with a scene of accepted "intercession for the transgressors." Surely this is a picture of salvation through Christ the Incarnate Son, and of eternal blessing through Christ the glorious Mediator!

But oh! how short the intercession of Abraham fell when compared with that which it prefigured. He pleaded and pleaded—for he loved his kindred, and pitied the wicked amongst whom they dwelt—but he came at last to a limit of his advocacy, and

he ceased to intercede, before the gracious ONE ceased to admit and grant his supplications. Our Mediator pleads for the guilty and condemned, and knows no limit but that of His own boundless love. The patriarch pleaded for the sake of "ten," and these ten could not eventually be found; Christ pleads for the sake of one, and that ONE is none other than Himself. He pleads a plea that can never fail; for He has taken His own blood within the veil, into the holiest of all, and there has presented it before the mercy-seat; and on the virtue of His own great sacrifice, perfect and complete, He grounds the intercession which evermore He is offering before God on our behalf. Well and truly has the Apostle written for our comfort, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2).

In the remarkable scene which has passed before us, the intercession in which the Angel Mediator took such a striking interest was really addressed to Himself: let us now inquire whether we can find any passage in Scripture in which He is represented as being Himself the Intercessor, and which, therefore, may furnish a more direct anticipation of His own glorious office as our present Advocate on high?

If we turn to the first chapter of Zechariah it will present us with the illustration which we require. The prophet beholds in a vision, "a man riding

upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him there were red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the Angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the Angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." It is generally agreed that these "myrtle trees," lowly but fragrant, represent the Jewish people in their depressed condition; and that the "bottoms," or low places in which they grew, have a reference to the low-lying lands along the Euphrates and the Tigris, where the scene of Judah's captivity was laid. The men upon horses of various colours, white, red, and speckled, represent the various agencies and ministries—some of them prosperous, others adverse, and others of a mingled character—which were employed on their account; but all these are evidently under the control of One superior to themselves, who stands, or abides, in the midst of His people; and to Him these messengers of His providence report the issue of their errands throughout the world. This Being is described both as "the Man" and "the Angel;" and is distinguished from the other, and evidently inferior angel, who

spoke to Zechariah. The whole scene indicates that He was none other than the great "Angel of the Covenant," who at such sundry times, and in such divers manners, appeared unto the Fathers, and who was then, as ever, concerning Himself about the interests of His Church and people.

But the next verses make this more evident; for they present this Angel of the Lord in His gracious office of Advocate and Intercessor, pleading with God on behalf of His oppressed and mourning people. "Then the Angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" Observe the cogency and force of this appeal. The ministering angels had announced to their great Superior, on their return, that the earth, that is, the whole heathen world, was "at rest"; but whilst it was flourishing, Judah was desolate and abased: and this becomes a powerful plea in the mouth of the Angel of Intercession as He pleads for the Jewish people, and beseeches mercy for them. Moreover, the time of chastisement had expired; the seventy years' captivity predicted by Jeremiah had come to an end, and therefore the Great Angel pleads that the promises of mercy might be now fulfilled, and that without delay: "O Lord, how long?"

Does it not recall the scene in the Revelation where the souls "under the altar" cry with a loud

voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth?" (Rev. vi. 10). And does it not recall still more vividly a wondrous scene in the same book, where "another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne"? (Rev. viii. 3). No mere angel this, but the Great High Priest and Advocate above, the only Mediator between God and men! His golden censer kept in the holiest of all, to which none but the High Priest had access, fixes and confines the application of the passage to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is worth observing, that, as in Zechariah, the Angel of Intercession is distinguished from the messengers of His providence, who went to and fro through the earth, so in Revelation the Angel with the golden censer is distinguished from the seven angels to whom were given the seven trumpets, which heralded and announced God's judgments upon the world. It was when St. John saw the seven inferior angels which had the seven trumpets prepared to sound, that he saw "another Angel" with the golden censer proceeding to the golden altar in sacerdotal power and dignity to offer up his incense with the prayers of the saints (Rev. viii. 1—6).

Thus, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the Lord Jesus stands forth as "the Angel of

Intercession," through whom alone all prayer and supplication go up to God, and by whom alone the glorious office of Advocate can be fulfilled. And is it not cheering to find how the intercession of the Angel amongst the myrtle trees was received and answered? Zechariah goes on to say, "The Lord answered the Angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words" (ver. 13); and then proceeds to communicate the substance of those gracious promises and blessings, which were then and thus vouchsafed in answer to the Angel's prayer. Jerusalem was to be restored; the house of the Lord was to be rebuilt; prosperity was to flow to Judah, and peace and comfort unto Zion (vers. 14—17). Truly we may say concerning Christ, "Him the Father heareth always"; His is a plea that never can be set aside; His an intercession which is evermore effectual. We bless God that this Saviour "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25); and that "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John ii. 1). We love to trace His interest in this blessed work back to the ancient times; to see Him early in the book of Genesis as the Angel of Intercession receiving and encouraging Abraham's entreaties for the cities of the plain, and thus prefiguring His own for sinful men; and to behold Him late in the book of Zechariah as the Angel Advocate, human and yet divine, presenting His own earnest and effectual supplications on

behalf of God's ancient people, even as now He presents them for all the Israel of God. How assuring to our hearts to know that evermore He pleads our cause, and "appears in the presence of God for us"; that this blessed Jesus, in His office as well as in His love, is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"; and that the Father answers Him still with "good words and comfortable words," when He presents our prayers with the incense of His own intercession before the golden altar.

> "O Thou, the contrite sinner's Friend,
> Who, loving, lovest him to the end!
> On this alone my hopes depend,
> That Thou dost plead for me!"
>
> SPIRITUAL SONGS.

X.

THE ANGEL OF JUSTIFICATION.

As we have proceeded in our contemplations of these Manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, the nature and character both of His work and person have gradually unfolded themselves with a remarkable distinctness. We have not always followed the chronological order of these appearances of "the Angel of the Lord," but have preferred to arrange them in such a way as would best elucidate the prominent features of that mediatorial office which, in the fulness of time, He came to discharge. We have been led in this way from step to step through all the work of redemption, and seen it prefigured and proclaimed in these ancient Theophanies. The last of these manifestations, recorded on one of the last pages of the Old Testament, might well be taken as a summary of the whole, for it introduces the Second Person of the Trinity in His relation to that great work of justification, around which it may be truly said that the whole kingdom of Christ revolves. In this chapter we desire to point out how the office of "the Angel Mediator" and of "the Angel of In-

tercession," which we previously considered, are combined in the grander one of "the Angel of Justification" which closes the wonderful series.

The prophet Zechariah, whose glorious picture of "the Angel of Intercession" we lately studied, devotes another of his glowing chapters to the subject we have in hand. Writing after the captivity, and ready almost to close the canon of Jewish Scripture, he is favoured with a vision, which for the last time presents "the Angel of the Lord" to the readers of that inspired volume. It will be desirable, in the first instance, to present the vision as a whole :—

ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER III.

"1. And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

"2. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

"3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel.

"4. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

"5. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

"6. And the Angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

"7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou shalt also

judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk in among these that stand by.

"8. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the BRANCH.

"9. For, behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

"10. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree."

Let us, in the first place, get a clear idea of the characters introduced to us. An angel who had been employed, as recorded in the previous chapters, to unfold to him successive visions, introduces him here to a most striking scene. Prominent amongst the characters depicted in it stands Joshua, the well-known and great high priest of the restored Captivity; but, instead of being arrayed in his distinctive robes of "glory and of beauty," he is clad in garments which are filthy and defiled. This doubtless expressed, so far as the nation was represented by its high priest, the state of humiliation and distress to which the Captivity had reduced it, and the sin and guilt which had entailed this shame and misery. But more than this, Joshua not only appears in the vision in this abject and mean condition, but he stands as a criminal before the bar of God to answer the accusations that are being made against him, as though he deserved to be degraded from his office;

and no more permitted to wear the priestly dress, or officiate at the altar of the Most High.

And who is the accuser? Who but that "accuser of the brethren," that accuses them "before our God day and night" (Rev. xii. 10). "He showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." True to his name of "Satan," which means an Adversary or Accuser, he is here represented as bringing up charges against Joshua, and, through him, against the people of God whom he represented, alleging their iniquities and sins as a reason why they should be excluded from the presence and favour of the Lord.

But another and very different personage appears upon the scene. It is "the Angel of the Lord." At the outset he seems to be the presiding judge before whom accuser and accused appear; for "Joshua stood before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand to resist him" (ver. 1); but farther on he seems to be the Advocate of the accused, and to take his place accordingly: "The Angel of the Lord stood by" (ver. 5). In the description given of his opening address there seems to be a plain recognition of his Divine character, and also a distinction drawn between him and the First Person in the blessed Trinity. "The LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of

the fire?" Here, in the first instance, "the Angel" is described as "the LORD," *i.e.*, Jehovah, and he is then represented as appealing to "the LORD" to rebuke the Accuser. In other words, it is the Son of God assuming the attitude of Advocate, and in that attitude calling upon His Father to rebuke the Accuser: "The LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee."

The whole scene is graphic in the highest degree, and places in striking contrast the Accuser of the brethren, and the Advocate of the saints. It points out the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ assumes the defence of His people, and takes upon Him all the responsibility concerning them. This will be more apparent if we review the line of defence which He here takes up on behalf of Joshua, and the manner in which He vindicates him from Satan's malevolent accusations.

It was worth observing that this defence does not consist in a denial of the charges preferred against the high priest, nor in any justification of his appearing in the Divine presence in defiled garments. The plea proceeds upon altogether different grounds—grounds which, by implication at least, imply the former guilt and present unworthiness of the accused: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Applied to the Jewish people, whom Joshua represented, this expression might refer not only to the affliction from which they had lately been merci-

fully delivered, and the stains and miseries which their captivity in Babylon had left upon them, but also to those sins which had brought God's judgments upon them in that exile, and His forbearance and intervening grace which, notwithstanding those sins, had saved them from the utter ruin which they deserved.

But surely we read more than this in the prophetic vision. We see a picture here not so much of the Jewish people, as of the true Israel of God; a sample of the accusations preferred against them, and of the plea by means of which these accusations are repelled. On the one hand, we have Satan summing up every charge of guilt; insisting upon all their violations of the righteous law; raking up every inconsistency in the life and every symptom of depravity in the heart; and pointing with scorn and malice to their garments, which had been soiled with earthliness and sin. On the other hand, we have Christ vindicating His people's cause, and undertaking their defence. But observe the nature and progress of this vindication, as here foreshadowed by the great Angel of Justification.

The Angel's defence of Joshua was grounded first of all upon the act of mercy whereby he was plucked as a brand from the burning. And so in like manner the sinner's vindication is built upon the free and sovereign grace of God. If he is saved from hell, it is by the hand of Omnipotence; if he is permitted to stand before God, it is not on

account of any merit or deserving of his own, but solely through the free and unmerited favour of the Lord.

But this, though sufficient to secure his safety, is not enough to silence his Adversary. Satan could still point to the filthy garments in which Joshua was arrayed; and a mere act of mercy on the part of God towards the sinner would be liable to a similar objection at his hands. "What then," might the Adversary exclaim, "what then becomes of justice and holiness and truth? Where is the honour of the spotless law? What has become of the pillars of the eternal throne? Look at the sinner's filthy robes! Such mercy as this leaves them filthy still!"

So might "the Accuser of the brethren" have argued if the Angel of Justification had not anticipated the objection, and rendered it impossible to allege it:—"He answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment" (ver. 4). Who could speak such words but God himself? Angels might remove the polluted robes, but who, except the Angel of the Covenant, whose blood "cleanseth from all sin," could remove the sin which these robes represented? Who but the LORD himself could say, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee"? These words were spoken to

Joshua himself, because they were meant no less for his comfort, than for Satan's discomfiture, and the action which accompanied these words of grace was full of deep significance. It was a change of raiment; it was a change from the filthy to the pure, from the mean to the glorious; from all that was unsuitable for a man who was to minister before God in holy things, to those resplendent robes of office which so well became the holiness and majesty of His temple.

Can we not read in this the whole story of justification? Is it not the shadow of that great truth which is set forth so fully in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans? Do we not here perceive how "every mouth is stopped," and all the world brought in "guilty before God"? Do we not see ourselves destitute of righteousness on account of sin, and polluted before God on account of our transgressions? Do we not read in this instructive vision how sin is to be put away by Christ himself, and how a spotless robe is provided by Him to cover all our nakedness, "even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe"? (Rom. iii. 22.) Is not this the truth which silences the accusations of the adversary? Is not this the righteousness which vindicates God's law whilst it magnifies His grace? It is the righteousness of God, and not our own. It is a righteousness vouchsafed of God, and received by faith in Jesus Christ. It is a righteous-

ness so perfect that in it can be found no flaw or rent, and against it can be alleged no defect. Clad in this, the sinner, who in himself was guilty and defiled, is justified and accepted in the sight of God. He has "put on Christ," and thus arrayed, justice can find no fault, and Satan himself can forge no accusation against him.

That we are fully justified in giving this interpretation to the passage before us is plain from the 9th verse, in which "the Angel of the Lord" applies it in this very way, and fixes the reference of the vision to the forgiveness of Israel's guilt. He closes the remarkable scene with the words, "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." How suggestive, therefore, and how instructive is this whole scene! Christ, as the Angel of the Lord, stands distinctly before us in the vision as the Angel of Justification. It is His last manifestation in the Old Testament times, and it is one full of the deepest and most vital meaning. He appears to sum up in this, as it were, His parting revelation to the ancient Church,—the "wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort," that "we are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings." (Art. XI.) We can read it now in clearer light, and therefore with deeper interest, than either Joshua or Zechariah could read it then; but not in clearer light or deeper interest than the coming Saviour beheld it when He took part in this

wondrous scene, and set forth in prophetic vision the nature of that great salvation which in the fulness of time He was to accomplish.

It is worth observing that Joshua himself took no defence against the accusations of the great Adversary; he left it all to his Divine Advocate, and answered not a word. How safely and how securely may the believer leave his case in the hands of Christ! Though law, and conscience, and Satan are ready to accuse, yet, in the words of the evangelical prophet, he may triumphantly exclaim, "The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me." And then turning away from all adversaries to the one glorious and blessed Advocate, he may confidently adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say, "Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God."

When once the Angel of Justification espoused Joshua's cause, all the accusations of the enemy were not only repelled but silenced. The high priest stands not only acquitted but accepted, and Satan vanishes from the scene confuted and confounded. No longer a criminal under arraignment, but an accepted minister of the sanctuary; no longer in the abject dress of degradation as if he were a felon, but in the sacerdotal robes of exalted and

acknowleged dignity, the servant of God stands before the Angel of the Lord. O wondrous emblem of thy state, thou child of God! Thou art "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6), "covered with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. lxi. 10), and "perfect through My comeliness, which I have put upon thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xvi. 14).

This inspired picture needed but one thing to make it perfect. It had set forth the justification of the sinner "through the righteousness of God"; but it had not as yet displayed his sanctification by the Holy Spirit. This therefore is added to complete the picture: "And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head" (ver. 5); and then the high priest stood forth not only with his ephod and his breast-plate, and his broidered robe of dignity, but with his mitre of priestly sanctity upon his head, and inscribed on its golden plate above his forehead the words of consecration—"HOLINESS TO THE LORD." Thus does Christ provide not only for the justification but for the sanctification of His servants. Whom He justifies, them He also glorifies; and the renewal of their hearts by grace here on earth is only the first step in that transforming process, which shall be completed in their perfect holiness hereafter in heaven.

"The Angel of the Lord stood by" during all this striking scene; stood by to hear and answer Satan's accusation; stood by, to see Joshua clad in

the resplendent robes; stood by, to witness the emblem and pledge of holiness placed on his consecrated brow; stood by, to manifest His intense interest in the justification and sanctification of His accused but accepted servant. And observe how He closes the memorable interview; first He gives a solemn charge to Joshua to walk in His ways and to keep His charge, and adds a gracious promise that he shall have a place of dignity and blessedness, amongst those that stand around Him (ver. 7); and then as the Divine ONE He proclaims His own approaching Advent in the flesh, under a most significant emblem, "I will send forth My servant THE BRANCH." At first sight there would appear to be little connection between this title of the Redeemer and the special scene with which it here stands connected, but a little consideration will show that it has a very close link with it.

Isaiah and Jeremiah had already prophesied of the Messiah under this emblem; but two very distinct Hebrew words had been used to express it. In Isaiah xi. 1, we read: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a BRANCH shall grow out of His roots." The word here used signifies a tender shoot, which requires care for its preservation, and is most appropriately applied to Christ, who took our feeble nature upon Him, and in it subjected Himself to indignity and suffering for our sins. But in Isaiah iv. 2, we read: "The BRANCH of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious." The

word used in this passage is derived from a root that indicates rapid and vigorous increase. It is this latter word which is used by the Angel of Justification in Zechariah; and it intimates that, notwithstanding all the opposition of Satan, and all the apparent meanness of the Messiah's state on earth, He should be advanced to the highest dignity, and exalt His people to it along with Him. Though, like Joshua, He should be clad in sordid raiment, and opposed by the great Adversary, yet, like him, he should come forth as the great High Priest of the Church of God, exalted to honour and glory, when He had put away His people's sins.

Thus beautifully and significantly does the Messiah stand at the close of the Old Testament dispensation, appearing as "the Angel of Justification" to foreshadow His own glorious work, and to announce in this memorable vision that it was He himself who was to put away our sins and to render us accepted in the sight of God.

"When penitence has wept in vain
Over some foul dark spot;
One only stream, a stream of blood,
Can wash away the blot!

"'Tis Jesus' blood that washes white,
His hand that brings relief:
His heart that's touched with all our joy,
And feels for all our grief."

MRS. ALEXANDER.

XI.

THE ANGEL OF JUDGMENT.

In reviewing the manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, we have observed that it was mainly in His gracious offices of love and mercy that He made Himself known to the sons of men before His Advent; prefiguring to them from time to time the leading features of His mediatorial work, and the blessed characteristics of His Gospel kingdom. But as that kingdom was to have its enemies and its conflicts, and He, as its Head and Sovereign, was to exercise judgment and justice, it was natural that some indications of this sterner aspect of His reign should also present themselves; and accordingly we have already caught glimpses of the Angel of the Lord going forth in His power and majesty to be the Deliverer of His people and the Adversary of their enemies.

You will remember that after appearing to Abraham as the Angel of Intercession, and receiving his earnest supplications on behalf of the cities of the plain, He departed to the scene of destruction, and appears to have been the chief agent in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah: "Then

the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven." Again, on that memorable night when the Israelites came forth out of Egypt, the Angel of the Lord appears upon the scene, not only as the Deliverer of the ransomed people, but as the executioner of Divine wrath against their inhuman oppressors. It was "the Angel of the LORD" who winged His flight of death across the land; and it was the "Angel of the LORD" who went before the tribes in the pillar of cloud and fire, and stood between them and their pursuers, to be a light to the one and darkness and confusion to the other.*

We have now to trace out some other instances of a like kind in the Old Testament, and to shew that, according to His own New Testament declaration, "God hath committed all judgment unto the Son;" that He stands forth in the older volume no less than in the new as the Adversary of evil, and as the true and righteous Judge. And we shall see that as surely as God "hath appointed a day in which He will judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ," so surely did Christ give witness of this in the older revelation, and manifest Himself beforehand as the great Avenger of sin, and the great Upholder of righteousness. If His more frequent

* Compare chapter ix. of Ezekiel, where six men, each with a slaughter-weapon in his hand, come forth from the temple; and a seventh with a writer's ink-horn by his side, to set a mark upon the foreheads of the righteous, in order to secure their safety.

manifestations were those of mercy and grace, He left not Himself without witness that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne," so that men and angels might exclaim, "Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest."

The history of Balaam presents us with a memorable example of this kind. The covetous and impious prophet had gone forth upon his journey, in the hope of being able to earn "the wages of unrighteousness" by gratifying Balak, and cursing the people of God; and "God's anger was kindled because he went: and the Angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him" (Num. xxii. 22). Ten times in the narrative this mysterious Adversary is described as "the Angel of the LORD," and the record leaves it beyond a doubt that this was more than an angel, even the same Almighty and Eternal Being—the Son of God, who in such multiplied instances appeared unto the sons of men.

Balaam's ass, more discerning than its benighted master, "saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way, and His sword drawn in His hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way" (ver. 23). By successive movements the Angel hems Balaam in. "The Angel of the

Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the Angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again" (ver. 24). O the miserable blindness and infatuated madness of the transgressor in his ways of sin! But there is no escape from the Angel Adversary, for "the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left" (ver. 26). And now once more the brute beast evinces a clearer discernment than its ungodly owner: "When the ass saw the Angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam:" and he, in his utter darkness and persistency of evil, smites her with a staff. And then the wondrous miracle takes place: "The dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Peter ii. 16). And now it was time for the unrighteous prophet to be shown his danger and his sin: "The LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way, and His sword drawn in His hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face" (ver. 31). And then he hears another voice, more alarming than that of the dumb animal which he rode, and another rebuke more terrible than that which came from the mouth of his ill-used beast: "The Angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? be-

hold, I went out to withstand thee" (in the margin it is "to be an Adversary unto thee") "because thy way is perverse before Me: and the ass saw me, and turned from Me these three times: unless she had turned from Me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive" (vers. 32, 33).

Who, then, was this Angel Adversary that not only enabled the ass to speak, but spoke Himself to Balaam in such language of lofty and severe rebuke, and thus majestically claimed the power of judgment and of death? Who but that same Almighty One who "at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers," even the eternal Son who was in the bosom of the Father, and yet was the Revealer of God to man. His language is remarkable; it is not the language of a creature; he does not say, "Thy way is perverse before God," but, "Thy way is perverse before ME." We know that it was the LORD, and not any created being, whom Balaam had offended, for we read, "God's anger was kindled because he went;" and therefore it was, that "the Angel of the LORD" (whom we have so often identified with the LORD himself) "stood in the way for an Adversary against him." And this is further confirmed by the Angel's subsequent command to Balaam, "Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak" (ver. 35). If we compare this with the instructions previously given to Balaam by God himself, no doubt can be left

upon our minds that the "Angel of Judgment" was Jehovah; for we read in the 20th verse that "God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Thus we see that it was the word which God was to speak to Balaam that he was to deliver, and yet it is this very word which the Angel claims to be His own: "The word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak." Thus do the words, as well as the whole tone of the narrative identify the Angel with Jehovah, according to that great principle laid down in the New Testament, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 18).

With such illustrations before us of Christ's taking part, before His first advent, in the mysterious work of judgment, there is very little doubt, and much to believe that in other Old Testament instances, where "the Angel of the LORD" is represented as executing the wrath of God upon rebellious men, it was the Second Person of the glorious Trinity who was thus employed. For example: when we read that at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, and Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance, "The Angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand" (2 Kings xix. 35), there

seems to be every reason for supposing that this was not a different Angel from that Angel of Judgment, who in former ages had again and again interfered for the deliverance of His people; and concerning whose judgments on the enemies of Israel the Psalmist probably uses the remarkable words, "Let them be as the dust before the wind, and the Angel of the LORD scattering them; let their way be dark and slippery, and let the Angel of the LORD persecute them" (PS. xxxv. 5, 6).

And this will appear the more probable when we consider that this same "Angel of the LORD" is again and again introduced as administering reproof even to the people of God, and inflicting severe chastisements upon them for their transgressions. If we thus find judgment beginning at the house of God, and executed upon it by this mysterious Angel, we need not marvel that He should come forth as an Avenger to execute wrath upon the enemies of the Lord. Two memorable instances of such severe dealing with the people of God present themselves—one in the time of the Judges, the other in the time of the Kings; the one brings "the Angel of Judgment" before us in the character of a dread Reprover; the other is that of a terrible Minister of Justice.

The people were assembled at Bochim, at a distance, as it would appear, from the tabernacle of God, heedless as to His worship themselves, and utterly unmindful of the directions which they had

received to extirpate the idolatry of the land. It was at this juncture the Angel of the Lord came amongst them, and it is especially noted that He "came up from Gilgal"—the very place where the sanctuary had been set up, and the public worship of the true God introduced into the land of Canaan. This Angel addresses the people in language of stern and severe reproof, and it is language which at every sentence implies that He who uttered it was divine: "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed My voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you" (Judges ii. 1—3). Is this like the language of the prophets who said, "Thus saith the Lord"? Is not this the language of Jehovah himself, and not of any delegated servant? Are not the claims which are thus set forth, the covenant which is here appealed to, the mercies here recounted, and the commandments here recited, those of the Lord himself? And does not this "Angel of Judgment" refer to them as His own, and threaten rebellious Israel with His heavy displeasure? No marvel that we read in the next verse, "It came to pass, when the Angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up

their voice, and wept" (ver. 4). No marvel that the place in which this mighty Angel denounced these woes should be called the place of "Weepers," for "they called the name of that place Bochim, and they sacrificed there unto the LORD" * (ver. 5).

The other instance occurred in the days of David. He had provoked the God of Israel to anger by his pride in numbering the people. The terrible choice between famine, war, or pestilence had been given to him, and he had humbly and wisely resolved to "fall into the hands of the LORD." "The Angel of the LORD" is sent forth on the errand of judgment through the land, and "there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men" (2 Sam. xxiv. 15). He had reached Jerusalem, and the pestilence was about to devastate the city. It was just at this moment the mercy of God interposed, for "when the Angel stretched out His hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented Him of the evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the Angel of

* Hengstenberg observes that the very fact of this sacrifice at Bochim is in itself a proof that the Israelites believed that God had drawn near to them in a remarkable manner; and he adds, "In the Book of Judges there is not a single sacrifice mentioned as being offered by the Israelites in any other place than by the ark of the covenant, with which the offering of sacrifice was associated by the law of Moses, except in the case of an extraordinary appearance on the part of God."—See "Christology," vol. iv., app. iii. p. 292.

the LORD was by the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (ver. 16).

How remarkable was the instant and the place chosen for this gracious arrest of judgment!—The holy city where God's Name was to dwell!—The threshing-floor upon which, in after days, the Temple of God was to stand; and close to, if not the very spot, where Abraham was commanded to offer up his son! It was here (as we already noticed) that this same Divine Being appeared to the patriarch as "The Angel of the Covenant," providing a sacrifice instead of his son, and pronouncing a blessing upon his faith and obedience. And now once more did the Covenant of the Lord, and the virtue of the great sacrifice which was yet to be offered, stay the arm of the Almighty Angel as He stood ready to destroy.

By comparing the parallel passage in the Book of Chronicles it is plain that David saw this Angel of Judgment, and that the mercy vouchsafed was granted in answer to prayer: "And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the Angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in His hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces" (1 Chron. xxi. 16). And now let us attend to David's self-condemning and earnest prayer: he said unto God, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done

evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Thy people, that they should be plagued." Thus did David pray, and it was through the Angel of Judgment that the answer of mercy came; for "the Angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (ver. 18). The altar was built, the offerings were placed upon it, and God "answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the LORD commanded the Angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof" (vers. 26, 27). There seems quite enough in all this to support the belief that this Angel was Divine; but another passage in the Second Book of Chronicles throws additional light upon the subject. In referring to the erection of the temple upon this hallowed and designated spot, our version has the following remarkable passage: "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in Mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chron. iii. 1). Thus, according to our translation, the Angel who appeared to him was the LORD; and even if we prefer the marginal reading (which does not bring this point out so distinctly), yet enough remains to lead us to the

conclusion, so favoured by many other passages of Scripture, that it was Christ himself who appeared in that wondrous crisis of chastisement and grace, which no doubt made David exclaim, "I will sing of mercy and of judgment; unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing."

Our review, therefore, presents Christ to us as "The Angel of Judgment," and we behold Him exhibiting in these Old Testament times some of those acts of power and justice which are to constitute hereafter a part of His mediatorial government. He Himself assures us that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son," and He assigns the reason, namely, "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 22, 23). Furthermore He teaches us that the Father "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (ver. 27). This is a point insisted upon again and again by His inspired apostles, who concur in describing Him as "the Judge of quick and dead." Amid all the solemn descriptions in the Book of Revelation, none are so solemn as those which describe Christ's final judgment, and the "wrath of the Lamb." Take, for example, the appalling scene described in the close of the sixth chapter of that Book, where "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves

in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Such shall be the terror of the day of the Lord and of His Christ; it was meet, therefore, that this aspect of His power should be shadowed forth in the older economy, and that "the Angel of Judgment" should appear again and again upon the scene to prepare the way for His more awful office. Viewed in this light, how terrible are the words of Deborah's triumphal song—"Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the LORD; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;" and how remarkable it is that forthwith Meroz disappears from history before the blighting sentence of the Angel of Jehovah!

But here, too, the distinction is preserved between His judgments upon the ungodly and His messages of reproof and chastisement to the people of God. For the Canaanite and Egyptian the Angel of the Lord is a consuming fire; for the tribes of Israel He is a refiner and purifier of silver, correcting their errors, forgiving their sins, and sanctifying their hearts. For the one, no altar burns and no smoke of sacrifice ascends, and therefore no Saviour pleads; for the other, in the midst of wrath He remembers mercy, and converts the sword of justice into the rod of chastening. An Adversary indeed—

and oh! how terrible to those who, like Pharaoh or Balaam, reject His truth, and whose ways are perverse before Him; but a Friend and Deliverer—and oh! how gracious to those who, like David, draw near to Him with penitence and faith through the blood of the atonement, and love Him with all their hearts.

It is only when we behold the Christ of God in "the Angel of Judgment," and know that it is Jesus our Redeemer who sits upon the throne of justice, that we can calmly and rejoicingly exclaim, "We believe that Thou shalt come: to be our Judge. We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood."

"With us they stayed, high warning to impart:
The Christ shall come again,
Even as He goes—with the same human heart,
With the same godlike train.

"Oh! jealous God! how could a sinner dare
Think on that dreadful day,
But that with all Thy wounds Thou wilt be there,
And all our angel friends to bring Thee on Thy way?"

KEBLE.

XII.

THE ANGEL CONQUEROR.

WHEN arranging the order of this series of papers upon the manifestations of Christ in the Old Testament, we purposely reserved for the last that aspect of His glory as the Angel of the Lord, which is the earnest and type of His final victory. We have already beheld Him as the Guardian of His Church and the Adversary of its enemies; we have beheld Him as "the Angel of Judgment," exercising justice and vindicating truth. The character in which we have now to consider Him arises out of these relationships, or rather it is the fulness and completion of all those manifestations which we have been hitherto contemplating. We have to view Him as "the Angel Conqueror," supreme over all opposition, and triumphant over every foe.

It was predicted that the Messiah was to be "a Leader and Commander to the people" (Isa. lv. 4). He was to fill the office of Champion and Conqueror for the armies of the living God. And accordingly we find Him represented in the New Testament as "the Captain of our salvation" (Heb. ii. 10), who went down into the great battle-field to

win victories for His people. His conquests over all the principalities and powers of darkness are set forth both in St. Paul's Epistles and in the sublime language of the Book of Revelation. The exulting language of Prophets and Apostles declares that "He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25).

Have we any Old Testament revelation of Christ in this peculiar and glorious attitude? Does "the Angel of the Lord," who shadowed forth from time to time all the other great characteristics of His work, stand out before us "the Angel Conqueror"? Did He reveal Himself in this, as well as in His other attributes and operations? Can we catch glimpses in those ancient days of the approaching time, when all kings shall fall down before Him, and the whole universe shall submit to His resistless sway?

A very striking passage in the Book of Joshua answers our inquiries; and it is all the more appropriate because it brings Joshua, who was an eminent type of Christ, into immediate contact with his great Antitype. That great leader of Israel who led the people into the promised land, and won such victories for them against manifold and powerful opponents, was by name as well as office a forerunner of the great Deliverer. His name, which was originally Oshea ("a Saviour") had been changed by Divine direction into Joshua, or Jah-Oshea ("the Lord, the Saviour"), and all his

achievements bore upon them the signal impress that his character answered to his name, and that he was a figure of Him who was to come.

Already the hosts under his command had crossed the Jordan, and kept their first Passover in the land of Canaan, right under the walls of Jericho. The "great city of palm-trees," with its strong walls and mighty bastions, frowned above them in its strength—a commencement and a sample of the many difficulties which they had to encounter. There is something suggestive in the words which tell that "Jericho was strictly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out and none came in." We can almost picture to ourselves the fancied security of its inhabitants as they entrenched themselves behind those impregnable barriers, and waited to see the beleaguring host dying of famine beneath their walls. Joshua, like a prudent general, was doubtless laying his plans for the siege, and meditating on the best methods for making an assault upon the stubborn city; and as he gazed upon these strong and majestic ramparts, his heart might well have failed him, but that the words of Moses, or rather of God himself, were ringing in his ears: "Be strong and of a good courage" (Josh. i. 6).

It was just at this juncture that "the Angel Conqueror" appeared to him in human form, as a majestic warrior, ready for the encounter: "It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he

lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a Man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand" (Josh. v. 13). This does not appear to have been a vision, but an actual occurrence belonging to the external world. With the valour of a true soldier, Joshua challenges this apparent combatant, and demands, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" It is plain from this that he had as yet no conception of the real nature of this celestial visitor, and that there was nothing in His appearance to indicate it. How astonished he must have been when, in a voice of majesty, the warrior replied, "Nay; but as Captain of the host* of the Lord am I now come!"

Here was a claim to authority which set even Joshua himself aside. The armed stranger says in effect, "I am the Prince of the armies of the living God. I am come to assume the command in person at this eventful crisis, and to deliver My people from their enemies with My own celestial legions, and by Mine own almighty power." It is plain that Joshua at once recognized the Divine authority which thus superseded his own; for in an instant the fearless general is prostrate in the dust, bowing down before

* This is generally understood as meaning the angels; thus Kiel observes, "He neither belonged to the Israelites, nor to their enemies, but was Prince of the army of Jehovah, *i.e.*, of the angels." It recalls Christ's own words, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (S. Matt. xxvii. 53).

this great Superior, and awaiting His commands with reverent submission: "Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto Him, What saith my Lord unto His servant?" (ver. 14).

If the story ended here, there would be still enough to show that Joshua recognized in this warrior-stranger a greater than himself, yea, a more than mortal man; but there is evidence that He was indeed Divine. Joshua worshipped Him, and so far from refusing the homage, the Captain of the Lord's host accepts it as His due, and in token thereof commands him, in the very same language which Jehovah had addressed to Moses at Mount Sinai, to take off his sandals and tender his profoundest reverence: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (ver. 15).

We have seen in a former chapter that the angel who appeared to Moses was none other than Christ himself, and a comparison of the two cases leaves no doubt that it was He who appeared in this instance to Joshua also. What was it that consecrated the spot in the desert where Moses stood? Was it not the presence of God? And what gave sanctity to the place beneath the walls of Jericho, where Joshua challenged the unexpected warrior? Was it not the presence of God also? You remember how Stephen identifies the angel in the former case with the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and refers to this very command about

loosing the shoes from the feet as significant of that mysterious presence :—

ACTS vii. 30—33.

"30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sina an Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

"31. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

"32. Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

"33. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

In the Book of Revelation, when John bowed down before the angel, who had been unfolding to him the glories of the New Jerusalem, he was forbidden to render such homage to a creature: "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant. . . Worship God" (Rev. xxii. 9). But in the case of Moses and of Joshua, their devoutest worship is not only permitted, but demanded as a right. We conclude, therefore, that it was God himself who appeared to both, and coupling this with the Baptist's declaration—"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"—we are led to the inevitable deduction that the "Captain of the Lord's host," as well as the Angel in the burning bush, was no other than the Second Person in the blessed Trinity.

The contrast between these two manifestations of Christ is full of meaning and instruction. To Moses it was rather a revelation of the Godhead of Christ dwelling in human nature, and this was well symbolized by the flame of fire in the bush; whilst to Joshua it was rather a revelation of Christ's human nature, without any external exhibition of His glorious deity, and, therefore, He appeared to him not even as an angel, but as a Man. There was nothing at first sight to indicate to Joshua the glory of this Divine Being; a man like unto himself was all that met his view; but very soon the true dignity of this incarnate One manifested itself in the title which He assumed, in the homage which He demanded, and still more in the nature of that extraordinary victory, which He immediately afterwards vouchsafed to Joshua and the Israelites. Can we not see in all this how the eternal Son of God was preparing the way for His indwelling in the flesh, and shadowing forth that union of the divine and human natures in Himself, which in the fulness of time was to be more signally revealed?

But further evidence is thrown around this manifestation of Christ to Joshua, when we look attentively at the next chapter. The first verse of it (which we have already quoted, and which refers to the strictness of the siege) is plainly a parenthesis; and when we read the story consecutively without it, the identity between the "Man" who appeared to Joshua, and "the LORD" who gave him direc-

tions concerning the conquest of the city is apparent. It reads thus: "And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto to Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him."

You will observe that it is the same Being that appeared to Joshua in the commencement of the story, as an armed man, who gives directions to Joshua in the sequel as to the conduct of the siege; and though he is only described in the close of the sixth chapter as the "Captain of the Lord's host," he is distinctly entitled, at the beginning of the seventh chapter, "the LORD," that is, Jehovah. This plainly identifies Jehovah with the Man who appeared to Joshua before Jericho, and thus, as we have seen, identifies Christ with this Angel Conqueror.

It would be interesting to trace, in the overthrow of Jericho, a likeness to the methods by which the kingdom of Satan is to be subdued to the Son of God. Nothing to the eye of sense could have been more unsuited to achieve the object than those employed. How the inhabitants must have laughed to scorn the insane march of the Israelites around their walls, and despised the ark which preceded them, and the rams' horns which proclaimed their expected victory! The whole procedure, as it was repeated from day to day, must have excited their contempt and laughter, and when on the seventh day Israel compassed the walls again and again, and each time apparently to no purpose, their self-confidence and scorn must have reached its greatest height. Nothing but the strongest faith could have induced such a warrior as Joshua to employ such unlikely means, or to expose himself to such apparently well-deserved contempt. But he knew that the Captain of the Lord's host, who directed these measures was Divine, and he put his trust in them as the arrangements of Omnipotence. Nor was he disappointed. The seventh day came; the seventh circuit with the ark was completed, and the last long blast from the jubilee trumpets resounded round the city; and then, without any human aid or visible interference, but "by faith, the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days!" (Heb. xi. 30.)

It reminds us of that wondrous verse in the

Apocalypse, "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb; and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. xii. 11). It recalls that marvellous saying of the Apostle, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds); casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. x. 3–5). The ark and the sound of these despised trumpets remind us of the atonement of Christ, and the foolishness of preaching, and explain to us how the victories of the cross are gained—"not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

We have already seen something of Christ's conquests in the world; but they are only samples and earnests of what yet remain. The fall of Jericho, the frontier city, was only a prelude to other victories and an assurance that all the land and all its cities should be finally their own. Christ's victories, already won, are pledges and preparations for His final triumphs. Already He has "spoiled principalities and powers and made a shew of them openly;" but His ultimate conquests shall be more glorious still. The day is coming when "the Captain of the Lord's host"—the true Joshua—shall appear to the discomfiture of every foe: "In that day shall the Lord of hosts defend the inhabitants

of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them" (Zech. xii. 8).

> "O'er ev'ry foe victorious,
> He on His throne shall rest;
> From age to age more glorious,
> All blessing and all blest!"

All that we have been hitherto considering in these papers was but a preparation for the great consummation. The various manifestations of Christ as "the Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament, and under such varying aspects, were but steps leading up to this ultimate triumph and dominion of the Christ of God. The fall of Jericho beneath the fiat of the Captain of the Lord's host, and the fall of Babylon before the Angel of the Apocalypse, are but precursors to greater victories and everlasting conquests. The mighty Angel who binds "that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan," and casts him into the bottomless pit, is only the herald of the mighty "Angel Conqueror" who shall "subdue all things unto Himself." So surely as the trumpets of Israel sounded before Jericho on the seventh circuit of the seventh day, and were accompanied by victory, so surely the seven thunders shall utter their voices, and the Seventh Angel shall sound; and "in the days of the voice of the Seventh Angel, when He shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as He hath declared to His ser-

vants the prophets" (Rev. x. 7). And then there shall be great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15). Then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Daniel, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 13, 14).

Meantime His voice speaks to us, as "the Captain of the Lord's host" did to Joshua, bidding us be strong and very courageous. In view of cities walled and built up to heaven; in the presence of foemen who hate and despise us; in expectation of conflicts manifold and terrible, the great Captain of our salvation assures us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). Above the din of the conflict and the shout of the battle rings out the Christian watchword, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4); and answering back with holy confidence to the Angel Conqueror's commands, the hosts of the Lord exclaim, "Blessing, and honour, and glory,

and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. v. 13).

"The trophies of the ages may grace yon olden shrine,
The flag of grander conquest, more ancient might, is Thine.
Created things have conquered what dies with passing breath,
But Thou, eternal Victor! oh, Thou hast conquered Death!

"O Love! whose sign is waving high o'er yon heavenly arch!
Whose blood-red track is guiding Thy soldier's thorny march!
Who death and sin hast trampled beneath Thee in our strife,
We love Thee, we adore Thee, our Way, our Truth, our Life!"

ALESSIE BOND FAUSSETT.

CONCLUSION.

We have now passed in review the various occasions on which the great "Angel of the Lord" manifested Himself to the Old Testament saints, and we are in a position to estimate the character and value of those appearances. We stated at the outset that the great argument which was to be derived from these manifestations, was of a cumulative kind. It is only by comparing and combining them together, that we can estimate the full weight of that testimony, which they bear both to the pre-existence and divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But it seems impossible that any unprejudiced mind could withstand their united force, or resist the powerful argument presented by their combination. It presents not merely a chain of evidence which reaches from the earliest times down to the very close of the Old Testament canon, but every link in the chain is of the strongest and most reliable character. Not only are the names and attributes of Jehovah ascribed to "the Angel of the Lord," but He is represented as laying claim to them Himself. Incommunicable powers and operations of omniscience, omnipresence, and

omnipotence, are again and again assigned to Him, and asserted as His right. He acts in all things as Almighty and Supreme. He promises that which none but God can do. He performs that which only Deity can accomplish. He receives divine worship and demands the homage of His creatures.

But what most of all interests the Christian mind is this, that the Angel of the Lord appears upon the stage of the world's earlier history, only in order to reveal His Father unto men, to prepare the way for His own coming in the flesh, and to shadow forth the great outlines of His own mediatorial work and kingdom. Every part and portion of that work, as we have seen, was anticipated in these wondrous premonitions. From His incarnation to His cross, and thence onward to His resurrection and ascension, and onward still to His future advent and mediatorial reign, every step in the sublime history of Redemption was rehearsed beforehand by this Divine Ambassador from heaven. Type and prophecy seemed to mingle in these prophetic anticipations, and the Son of God himself appears as His own noblest and most interesting herald to mankind. The law, and the gospel; the guidance and guardianship of His Church; the right to rule, and the power to save; the virtue of His atonement; the power of His intercession; the union in Himself of the priestly, the prophetic, and the regal offices;—all these, and many other blessed aspects of His Messianic kingdom stand out

before us with a vividness and precision which remind us rather of the clear light of gospel times than of the dark shadows of the earlier dispensation. Reading them now, as we do, amid the blaze of New Testament fulfilment, they indicate a unity of purpose and design in all God's revelation to men, which enhances their value, and confirms our confidence in their truth.

"It was not," observes an ancient writer, "as if God had awaked out of a long sleep, and sent Jesus to the human race; for although He, for good reasons, fulfilled at this time the dispensation of the Incarnation, yet had He always been a benefactor to mankind; for nothing of what is good among men was ever done, except by the Word of God visiting the souls of those, who even for a little while, were capable of receiving such influences of the Divine Word." (Origen against Celsus, Book vi.)

It must not be forgotten that this wondrous "Angel of the Lord" disappears entirely from the New Testament history. The apparently exceptional case in the Book of Revelation (see page 107) is not historic, but symbolic, and adapts itself, as does the whole Apocalypse, to Jewish modes of thought. This *absence* of the Angel of the Lord from the Gospel period, might of itself convince us, that the Revealer of God in the older dispensation was not a different being from the Revealer in the later one. It was only the form of His manifestation that was

changed. In the one it was for the most part angelic, (though even that occasionally merged into the human form, which was to be eventually the most blessed medium of His intercourse with men) but in the other "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." It is this which brings Him so close to us as men, and endears Him to His Church as the suffering and sympathizing Saviour. But we cannot, and we would not forget, that long before "the days of His flesh," yea even from the earliest period of His Church's history, it was this same eternal Son of God, who tabernacled betimes upon earth, and had His delights with the sons of men. It was to this great truth that He himself so emphatically bore witness when He said, "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Luke x. 22). If angels cheered the disciples upon Olivet with the thought that "this same" Jesus would come to them again, so are our hearts cheered and gladdened with the thought that "this same Jesus" was from the beginning the Mediator between God and men, and that in the expressive language of inspiration, He is "the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

To use the remarkable words of another Father

of the Church: "For the elder people there was an elder covenant, and the Law schooled the people with fear, and the WORD was an Angel; but now unto His new and younger people, a new and better covenant has been given, and the WORD has come unto us, and fear has been turned into love, and that mystic angel is born, even JESUS." (Clem. Alex. Pædag. i. 7.)

Let all these precious manifestations of His grace and mercy call forth our gratitude and praise; let them quicken our faith into holier exercise, and kindle our love into a more fervent flame. Let us praise, and bless, and worship Him who, from generation to generation, has revealed God's truth and mercy to our lost and guilty race.

"O Bringer of Salvation,
Who wondrously hast wrought;
Thyself the Revelation
Of love beyond our thought:
We worship Thee, we bless Thee,
To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee,
Our gracious Lord, and King!

In Thee all fulness dwelleth,
All grace and power divine;
The glory that excelleth,
O Son of God, is Thine:
We worship Thee, we bless Thee,
To Thee alone we sing;
We praise Thee and confess Thee,
Our glorious Lord and King!

O grant the consummation
  Of this our song, above,
In endless adoration,
  And everlasting love:

Then shall we praise and bless Thee,
  Where perfect praises ring,
And evermore confess Thee,
  Our Saviour and our King."

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

APPENDIX.

As intimated in the preface, a few memoranda are subjoined to assist such readers as wish to enter more minutely into the criticism and literature of the subject which has been discussed in the previous pages.

The student is especially referred to Justin Martyr's "Apology" (63), and his "Dialogue with Trypho" (56, 126); to the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius, (Book i. c. 2), and to the "Pædagogus" of Clement of Alexandria, who constantly uses such phrases as λόγος ἄγγελος ην (*the Word was an Angel*), and μυστικὸς ἄγγελος (*the mystic Angel*), concerning the Being who appeared in Old Testament times.

It would be easy to give a long catena of quotations from subsequent Christian writers, but specimens of them can be seen in Bishop Bull's "Def. Fid. Nic.", Book i. c. 1. Others are given by Canon Liddon in his Bampton Lectures, who also sketches the history of the doctrine and its modifications both in ancient and modern times (Sect. ii. 1, and notes). See also Dr. Waterland's "Vindication," and Dr. Burton's "Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Divinity of Christ," p. 478, etc.

Dr. Pusey, in his "Lectures on Daniel the Prophet," has entered at considerable length into the subject, and has enlarged on one branch of it, which, on account of its obscurity, we have purposely avoided, viz., the position of Michael the Archangel, whom he and other writers endeavour to identify with Christ. Hengstenberg, who also maintains this opinion concerning Michael, has an exhaustive review of the Theophanies in his "Christology of the Old Testament" (vol. i. and iv.).

A remarkable posthumous work, "Christophaneia," by the Rev. George Kidd, of Scarborough, is worth consulting upon this and kindred subjects.

Archdeacon Lee, in his lectures on "The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," has presented some valuable thoughts upon the LOGOS, as the Revealer in both the Jewish and Christian dispensations. We have not been able to agree with him, or Dr. Mill, whom he quotes in his notes and appendix, with regard to "the Captain of the Lord's host" who appeared to Joshua, and have followed, in this matter, the opinion of Justin Martyr and Eusebius, believing that this appearance which they recognize as a divine one, though not specially mentioned as such by subsequent writers, is really included in the general statements of Tertuilian and others "that it was the Son of God himself that at all times appeared" (See Bp. Bull, i. 1, 18). Neither can we concur with the opinion which supposes that there was a withdrawal of the divine Angel from Israel in the wilderness and the substitution of a created one in His room, believing, as we do, that the threat of Jehovah was withdrawn and the Angel of God's presence restored. (See p. 10 of this volume.)

Students who would consult more elaborate treatises may be referred to Vitringa "De Angelo Sacerdote;" to Ode "De Angelis;" to Kiel's Commentaries, and to Vandenbroeck "De Theophaniis."

Those who would study the views of the ancient Jewish writers will find them attested by the glosses of the LXX.; for example, in Isa. ix. 6, *μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος* (the Angel of wonderful counsel), so rendered, as Gesenius observes, to show that in their opinion the Deity would appear in the Messiah as the Revealer of God, just as He did in The Angel of Old Testament times. Note, also, the substitution of '*ο ἄγγελος*' *Κυρίου* for JEHOVAH (Judges vi. 14, 16). Observe, also, several unmistakable passages in the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, which speak of a personally-subsisting Word, and describe Him as sent by God the Father (*e.g.*, Wisd. xviii. 15; Eccles. xxiv. 3; xliii. 26). See also "The Song of the Three Children," v. 26. The views of Philo concerning the LOGOS are so well known as scarcely to need a reference; but the student will find ample illustrations of them in Bp. Bull's "Def. Fid. Nic.," I. i. 30. Also in Cudworth's "Intellectual System," pp. 290, etc., and Dr. J. P. Smith's "Scripture Testimony." The Targums and Cabalistic books of the Jews present many interesting traces of their views upon the subject, and specimens may be seen in Hengstenberg (Christol. iv. 324). His sketch of their doctrine respecting the Metatron, or Divine Angel, will be found most interesting.

THE END.

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